

Marriage and (especially) Women in the Greco-Roman and Jewish World of the New Testament

Unless otherwise indicated the texts have been excerpted from the Perseus Project (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cache/perscoll_Greco-Roman.html). Biblical texts are cited from the ESV. Those references marked “WL” are excerpted from *Women's Life in Greece and Rome. A Source Book in Translation* (2nd. ed., Baltimore 1992) and can be found on the internet (<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/>). Others sources are as indicated in footnotes.

The quotations below have been chosen especially for the context they provide for understanding either the age difference between husbands and wives in the ancient world¹ or views of women and sexual expectations in that world. Much more could be said. The discussions in Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* and Veyne, *History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* are helpful starting points.

We tend to read Paul’s instruction about married life as though he were speaking to marriage as we know it rather than marriage as it was known in his context. As we might be tempted to overlay his teachings about masters and slaves on the employee-employer relationships that we know of today and apply them directly to a relationship which is institutionally different, we may be doing almost the same thing in our reading and application of Paul’s teaching on marriage.

For biblical references to age at marriage or age differences see the following:

The pre-flood ages for first children are extraordinarily late (see Gen. 5:3-32) but it *may be* that most of the post-flood ages (see Gen. 11:12-24) are to be seen as typical of later Israelite experience (and indicative of the ages at which the men married).

Genesis 11:¹² When Arpachshad had lived **35 years**, he fathered Shelah.

¹⁴ When Shelah had lived **30 years**, he fathered Eber.

¹⁶ When Eber had lived **34 years**, he fathered Peleg.

¹⁸ When Peleg had lived **30 years**, he fathered Reu.

²⁰ When Reu had lived **32 years**, he fathered Serug.

²² When Serug had lived **30 years**, he fathered Nahor.

²⁴ When Nahor had lived **29 years**, he fathered Terah.

²⁶ When Terah had lived **70 years**, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Genesis 17:17 Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to **a man a hundred years old**, or can **Sarah bear a child at ninety?**"

¹ The age difference has a great deal to do with the large numbers of widows who are encountered in texts of the period, and the establishment of special ministries of and for widows as well.

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Genesis 25:20 and **Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to be his wife**, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean.

Genesis 26:34 When **Esau was forty years old, he married Judith** daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.

Genesis 29:18-30 Jacob, had left home and worked for Laban 7 years before marrying Leah (and Rachel, whom he thought he was marrying in the first place).

1 Chronicles 2:21 Later, Hezron lay with the daughter of Makir the father of Gilead (**he had married her when he was sixty years old**), and she bore him Segub.

1. WL-Hesiod, *Works and Days* (7th century B.C.) [695]: “Bring home a wife to your house when you are of the right age, while you are not far short of thirty years nor much above; this is the right age for marriage. Let your wife be four years past puberty, and marry her in the fifth (ἡ δὲ γυνὴ τέτοος ἡβώοι, πέμπτω δὲ γαμοῖτο). Marry a maiden, so that you can teach her careful ways (παρθενικὴν δὲ γαμεῖν, ὡς κ' ἥθεα κεδνὰ διδάξης)[700] and especially marry one who lives near you, but look well about you and see that your marriage will not be a joke to your neighbors. For a man wins nothing better than a good wife, and, again, nothing worse than a bad one, a greedy soul who [705] roasts her man without fire, strong though he may be, and brings him to a raw old age.”

2. WL-32. Sophocles, *Tereus*, Fr. 585 Radt. (Athens, mid-5th cent. B.C.) After Procne's husband seduces her sister she contemplates women's experience in her society:

“But now outside my father's house, I am nothing, yes often I have looked on women's nature in this regard, that we are nothing. Young women, in my opinion, have the sweetest existence known to mortals in their fathers' homes, for their innocence always keeps children safe and happy. **But when we reach puberty and can understand, we are thrust out and sold away from our ancestral gods and from our parents. Some go to strange men's homes, others to foreigners', some to joyless houses, some to hostile. And all this once the first night has yoked us to our husband, we are forced to praise and to say that all is well.**”

3. Euripides, *Medea* 230-250 (431 B.C.), here Media is in despair after being forsaken by her husband: [230] Of all creatures that have breath and sensation, we women are the most unfortunate. First at an exorbitant price we must buy a husband and master of our bodies. [This misfortune is more painful than misfortune.] [235] And the outcome of our life's striving hangs on this, whether we take a bad or a good husband. For divorce is discreditable for women and it is not possible to refuse wedlock. And when a woman comes into the new customs and practices of her husband's house, she must somehow divine, since she has not learned it at home, [240] how she shall best deal with her husband. If after we have spent great efforts on these tasks our husbands live with us without resenting the marriage-yoke, our life is enviable. Otherwise, death is preferable. A man, whenever he is annoyed with the company of those in the house, [245] goes elsewhere and thus rids his soul of its boredom [turning to some male friend or age-mate]. But we must fix our gaze on one person only. Men say that we live a life free from danger at

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home while *they* fight with the spear. [250] How wrong they are! I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.

4. WL-Hippocrates (460?-377?), *On Virgins*; Hysteria in virgins:

As a result of visions [hysteria], many people choke to death, more women than men, for the nature of women is less courageous and is weaker. And **virgins who do not take a husband at the appropriate time for marriage experience these visions more frequently, especially at the time of their first monthly period**, although previously they have had no such bad dreams of this sort.... **My prescription is that when virgins experience this trouble, they should cohabit with a man as quickly as possible. If they become pregnant, they will be cured. If they don't do this, either they will succumb at the onset of puberty or a little later, unless they catch another disease.** Among married women, those who are sterile are more likely to suffer what I have described.

5. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Politics* (where more often than not he theorizes about a more perfect society, rather than discussing how things are in reality), 1335: “But the mating of the young is bad for child-bearing...And again it also contributes to chastity for the bestowal of women in marriage to be made when they are older, for it is thought that they are more licentious when they have had intercourse in youth. Also the males are thought to be arrested in bodily growth if they have intercourse while the seed is still growing, for this also has a fixed period after passing which it is no longer plentiful. Therefore **it is fitting for the women to be married at about the age of eighteen and the men at thirty-seven or a little before**--for that will give long enough for the union to take place with their bodily vigor at its prime, and for it to arrive with a convenient coincidence of dates at the time when procreation ceases.”

6. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Politics*, 1335: “And since the beginning of the fit age for a man and for a woman, at which they are to begin their union, has been defined, let it also be decided for how long a time it is suitable for them to serve the state in the matter of producing children. For the offspring of too elderly parents, as those of too young ones, are born imperfect both in body and mind, and the children of those that have arrived at old age are weaklings. Therefore the period must be limited to correspond with the mental prime; and this in the case of most men is the age stated by some of the poets, who measure men's age by periods of seven years, --it is about the age of fifty. **Therefore persons exceeding this age by four or five years must be discharged from the duty of producing children for the community, and for the rest of their lives if they have intercourse it must be manifestly for the sake of health or for some other similar reason.** As to intercourse with [literally, ‘touching’] another woman or man, in general it must be dishonorable for them to be known to take any part in it in any circumstances whatsoever as long as they are husband and wife and bear those names, but any who may be discovered doing anything of the sort during their period of parentage [1336a][1] must be punished with a loss of privilege suited to the offence.

7. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Politics*, 1.1253b, 1259a-b:

“And now that it is clear what are the component parts of the state, we have first of all to discuss household management; for every state is composed of households. **Household management** falls into departments corresponding to the parts of which the household in its turn is composed;

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and the household in its perfect form consists of slaves and freemen. The investigation of everything should begin with its smallest parts, and **the primary and smallest parts of the household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children**; we ought therefore to examine the proper constitution and character of each of these three relationships, I mean that of mastership, that of marriage (there is no exact term denoting the relation uniting wife and husband), and thirdly the progenitive relationship (this too has not been designated by a special name). Let us then accept these three relationships that we have mentioned.

And since, as we saw, the science of household management has three divisions, one the relation of master to slave, of which we have spoken before, one the paternal relation, and the third the conjugal --for **it is a part of the household science to rule over wife** (*γυναικὸς ἀρχεῖ*) **and children** (over both as over freemen, yet not with the same mode of government, but **over the wife to exercise republican government and over the children monarchical** [*οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἀλλὰ γυναικὸς μὲν πολιτικῶς τέκνων δὲ βασιλικῶς*]); for the male is by nature better fitted to command than the female (except in some cases where their union has been formed contrary to nature) and the older and fully developed person than the younger and immature. It is true that in most cases of republican government the ruler and the ruled interchange in turn (for they tend to be on in equal level in their nature and to have no difference at all), although nevertheless during the period when one is ruler and the other ruled they seek to have a distinction by means of insignia and titles and honors

8. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Politics*, 1.1253b, 1344a:

“We begin then with the rules that should govern a man's treatment of his wife. And the first of these **forbids him to do her wrong**; for if he observes this, he is not likely himself to suffer wrong at her hands. As the Pythagoreans declare, even the common rule or custom of mankind thus ordains, forbidding all wrong to a wife as stringently **as though she were a suppliant whom one has raised from the hearthstone**. And a man does wrong to his wife when he associates with other women.... **Good also is the advice of Hesiod: “Take thee a maiden to wife, and teach her ways of discretion.” For differences of ways and habits are little conducive to affection.**”

9. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Politics*, 3.1280a

“For instance, it is thought that justice is equality, and so it is, though not for everybody but only for those who are equals; and it is thought that inequality is just, for so indeed it is, though not for everybody, but for those who are unequal (*οἵον δοκεῖ ἵσον τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι, καὶ ἔστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πᾶσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἵσοις: καὶ τὸ ἀνισον δοκεῖ δίκαιον εἶναι, καὶ γὰρ ἔστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πᾶσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀνίσοις*). [This has been summarized as “It is as unjust to treat unequals equally as it is unjust to treat equals unequally.”]”

10. Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Eudemian Ethics* 7.1238b

“But another variety of these kinds is **friendship on a basis of superiority**, as in that of a god for a man, [20] for that is a different kind of friendship, and generally of a ruler and subject; just as the principle of justice between them is also different, being one of equality proportionally but not of equality numerically. **The friendship of father for son is in this class, and that of benefactor for beneficiary. And of these sorts of friendship themselves there are varieties:**

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the friendship of father for son is different from that of husband for wife--the former is friendship as between ruler and subject, the latter that of benefactor for beneficiary (αὗτη μὲν ὡς ἀρχοντος καὶ ἀρχομένου, ἥ δὲ εὐεργέτου πρὸς εὐεργετηθέντα.)”

11. Aristotle (384-322 BC), Nicomachean Ethics 1158b

“But there is a different kind of friendship, which involves superiority of one party over the other, for example, the friendship between father and son, and **generally between an older person and a younger, and that between husband and wife, and between any ruler and the persons ruled**. These friendships also vary among themselves. The friendship between parents and children is not the same as that between ruler and ruled, nor indeed is the friendship of father for son the same as that of son for father, **nor that of husband for wife as that of wife for husband**; for each of these persons has a different excellence and function, and also different motives for their regard, and so the affection and friendship they feel are different. [2] Now in these unequal friendships the benefits that one party receives and is entitled to claim from the other are not the same on either side; but the friendship between parents and children will be enduring and equitable, when the children render to the parents the services due to the authors of one's being, and the parents to the children those due to one's offspring. **The affection rendered in these various unequal friendships should also be proportionate: the better of the two parties, for instance, or the more useful or otherwise superior as the case may be, should receive more affection than he bestows; since when the affection rendered is proportionate to desert**, this produces equality in a sense between the parties, and equality is felt to be an essential element of friendship.”

12. Aristotle (384-322 BC), Nicomachean Ethics 1160b-61a

“The relation of husband to wife seems to be in the nature of an aristocracy: the husband rules in virtue of fitness, and in matters that belong to a man's sphere; matters suited to a woman he hands over to his wife. When the husband controls everything, he transforms the relationship into an oligarchy, for he governs in violation of fitness, and not in virtue of superiority. And sometimes when the wife is an heiress it is she who rules. In these cases then authority goes not by virtue but by wealth and power, as in an oligarchy.... **The friendship between husband and wife again is the same as that which prevails between rulers and subjects in an aristocracy; for it is in proportion to excellence** (ἀνδρὸς δὲ καὶ γυναικὸς ἀριστοκρατικὴ φαίνεται: κατ' ἀξίαν γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἀρχει, καὶ περὶ ταῦτα ἀ δεῖ τὸν ἀνδρα: ὅσα δὲ γυναικὶ ἀρμόζει, ἐκείνη ἀποδίδωσιν. ἀπάντων δὲ κυριεύων ὁ ἀνὴρ εἰς ὀλιγαρχίαν μεθίστησιν: παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ, καὶ οὐχ ἥ ἀμείνων. ἐνίστε δὲ ἀρχουσιν αἱ γυναικες ἐπίκλησι οὖσαι: οὐ δὴ γίνονται κατ' ἀρετὴν αἱ ἀρχαί, ἀλλὰ διὰ πλοῦτον καὶ δύναμιν, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς ὀλιγαρχίαις.... καὶ ἀνδρὸς δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα ἥ αὐτὴ φιλία καὶ ἐν ἀριστοκρατίᾳ: κατ' ἀρετὴν γάρ).”

13. Aristotle (384-322 BC), Nicomachean Ethics 1162

“**The question what rules of conduct should govern the relations between husband and wife, and generally between friend and friend, seems to be ultimately a question of justice.** There are different claims of justice between friends and strangers, between members of a comradeship and schoolfellows.... There are then, as we said at the outset, **three kinds of**

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friendship, and in each kind there are both friends who are on an equal footing and friends on a footing of disparity; for two equally good men may be friends, or one better man and one worse; and similarly with pleasant friends and with those who are friends for the sake of utility, who may be equal or may differ in the amount of the benefits which they confer. **Those who are equals must make matters equal by loving each other, etc., equally; those who are unequal by making a return proportionate to the superiority of whatever kind on the one side.”**

14. Demosthenes (Athenian, Attic orator; 384-322 BC), *Speeches*, 59.122:

“For this is what living with a woman as one's wife means--to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the deme, and to betroth the daughters to husbands as one's own. **Mistresses (έταιρας) we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines (παλλακας) for the daily care of our persons, but wives (γυναικας) to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.”**

15. Xenophon (Athens, 430?-355? BC) On Household Management [Oeconomicus]

3.10-14; How to train a wife:

“I can also show you that husbands differ widely in their treatment of their wives, and some succeed in winning their co-operation and thereby increase their estates, while others bring utter ruin on their houses by their behaviour to them.”

[11] “And ought one to blame the husband or the wife for that, Socrates?”

“When a sheep is ailing,” said Socrates, “we generally blame the shepherd, and when a horse is vicious, we generally find fault with his rider. **In the case of a wife, if she is taught by her husband (τῆς δὲ γυναικός, εἰ μὲν διδασκομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς) in the right way and yet does badly, perhaps she should bear the blame; but if the husband does not instruct his wife in the right way of doing things, and so finds her ignorant, should he not bear the blame himself?** [12] Anyhow, Critobulus, you should tell us the truth, for we are all friends here. Is there anyone to whom you commit more affairs of importance than you commit to your wife?”

“There is not.”

“**Is there anyone with whom you talk less?**”

“**There are few or none, I confess.**”

[13] “**And you married her when she was a mere child and had seen and heard almost nothing?**”

“**Certainly.**”

“**Then it would be far more surprising if she understood what she should say or do than if she made mistakes.**”

[14] “**But what of the husbands who, as you say, have good wives, Socrates? Did they train them themselves (αὐτοὶ ταύτας ἐπαίδευσαν)?**”

“**There's nothing like investigation.** I will introduce Aspasia to you, and she will explain the whole matter to you with more knowledge than I possess.

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16. Xenophon (Athens, 430?-355? BC) On Household Management [Oeconomicus]

6.17-10; How to train a wife:

(7.4) 'Ischomachus', I said, 'this in fact is what I'd like to learn from you-**did you teach your wife yourself** (*αὐτὸς σὺ ἐπαίδευσας τὴν γυναῖκα*) what she needed to know or did you take her from her father and mother knowing everything she was supposed to do?'

(7.5) Ischomachus replied, '**What could she have known when I married her, since she wasn't fifteen years old when she came to me, and in the time before that she had lived such a protected life that she saw and heard as little as possible, and asked the fewest questions?**'

(7.6) 'Aren't you satisfied that **she came knowing only how to take the wool and produce clothes, and seeing how the spinning was distributed to the women slaves?**'[4]

'She came to me, Socrates, quite knowledgeable about food, a matter that seems to me important for both men and women to know about'.

(7.7) I then asked, 'But what about other matters, Ischomachus? **Did you teach your wife yourself to do what she needed to do** (*αὐτὸς ἐπαίδευσας τὴν γυναῖκα*)?'

'No indeed, Socrates', Ischomachus said, (7.8) '**not before I offered a sacrifice and prayed that I could teach and she could learn** (*τυγχάνειν διδάσκοντα καὶ ἐκείνην μανθάνουσαν*) **what was best for us both**'.

I asked: 'Did your wife join you in offering sacrifice and making the prayer?'

'Yes, indeed,' he said, 'she offered to fulfil many vows to the gods if all went as it should, and **it was clear that she would be attentive to what she was taught**'.

(7.9) 'By the gods, Ischomachus', I said, 'explain to me, **what did you start to teach her first** (*τί πρῶτον διδάσκειν ἥρχου αὐτήν*)? It would give me more pleasure to hear you recount that than a success in games or with horses.'

(7.10) And Ischomachus answered: 'What did I do, Socrates? **Since she was already manageable and domesticated enough to participate in a discussion**, I asked her something like this: "Tell me, my dear, do you know why I married you and your parents gave you to me in marriage? (7.11) I know and it is obvious to you too that it would have been possible to sleep beside someone else. But I took counsel on my own behalf and your parents on yours how we might best share a home and children, if I chose you, and your parents chose me, as they apparently did, from the other possible candidates. (7.12) If the god allows it, children will be born, and then we will consult together how we will best educate them. This will be an advantage that we can share, to obtain the best allies and supporters in our old age.[5]

(7.13) 'But now there is the home we share, as follows. I shall share with you all my property, and you have shared with me everything you brought with you. We do not need to make an accounting of which of us contributed the larger amount, but you should realise that whichever of us is the better partner will make the most worthy contribution'.

(7.14) 'Then, Socrates, my wife answered me: "**But what can I contribute? What potential do I have? The only accomplishment I learned from my mother is to behave properly**".

(7.15) "Yes, by Zeus, my dear, that's what my father taught me also. But it is the task of a proper husband and wife to keep their property as well as possible and see that so far as possible other property accrues from their just and good behaviour".

(7.16) "**What is it that I can do**", asked my wife, "**that might cause the household to prosper?**"

"By Zeus", I said, "you can try to do what the gods made you able to do and custom advises".

(7.17) "And what is that?" she asked.

"I think", I said, "that it is a most important responsibility, unless you think that the work the leader bee supervises in her hive is unimportant."

(7.18) "For it seems to me, my dear", Ischomachus told me he said, "that the gods took considerable care to establish this yoke as it is called, male and female, so that it might be most effective in partnership. (7.19) First of all this yoke exists so that the race of living things will be continued by the begetting of children, and then human beings provide themselves with care in their old age by means of this yoke. Furthermore, humans do not live their lives in the open air, as animals do, but it's evident that they require roofs over their heads. (7.20) But it is important for humans to conserve what they are going to bring into their homes from the work they do outside in the open air-for ploughing and sowing and growing and herding are all of them outdoor work, which provide our provisions.

(7.21) "It is important then, when the provisions are brought into the home, for someone to keep them safe and to do the work of the household. A home is required for the rearing of infant children, and a home is required for making food out of the harvest. Similarly a home is required for the making of clothing from wool. (7.22) Since both indoor and outdoor matters require work and supervision", I said, "**I believe that the god arranged that the work and supervision indoors are a woman's task, and the outdoors are the man's.** (7.23) For the god made a man's body and soul better able to endure the cold and heat of travel and military service, so that he assigned to him the outdoor work. But the god endowed the woman with a body less able to endure these hardships and so", Ischomachus told me he said, "I believe that he assigned the indoor work to her. (7.24) With this in mind the god made the nursing of young children instinctive for women and gave her this task, and he allotted more affection for infants to her than to a man.

(7.25) "The god designated that the woman should guard what is brought into the household, because he knew that a fearful soul is better at guarding. He also gave a greater share of fearfulness to the woman than to the man. Because he knew that it would be necessary for the one who did the outdoor work to defend the household, if someone tried to hurt it, he allotted to him a greater share of courage. (7.26) But because it was necessary for both to give and take, he divided the shares of memory and concern equally between them, so that it is impossible to decide whether the female or the male excels in this respect. (7.27) And self-control where needed he divided equally, and the god allowed whichever of the two was better, whether it was the man or the woman, to get more advantage from this benefit. (7.28) Because the natures of the two sexes are not equally well equipped in all the same respects, for that reason they have greater need of one another and the yoke is mutually beneficial, because what one lacks the other has.

(7.29) "Now, my dear", I said, "since we both understand what has been assigned to us by the god, each of us must try to accomplish the work appropriate to us. (7.30) This is what the law intends", Ischomachus told me he said, "when it yokes man and wife. Since the god made them partners in their children, so the law makes them partners in their household. And that the law shows that the arrangement that the god made each more competent in certain respects. For **it is better for a woman to remain indoors than to go outside, and it is more disgraceful for a man to remain inside than to take care of the work outside.** (7.31) **If anyone does something contrary to the nature the god gave him, it is quite possible that his disorderliness will not escape the notice of the gods and that he will pay the penalty for ignoring his proper work or doing a woman's work.**

(7.32) "I believe", I said, "that the leader bee has the same kind of work assigned to her by the god".

"And what sort of work is it", said my wife, "that the leader bee does that resembles the kind of work I ought to do?"

(7.33) "It is", said I, "that the leader bee, although she stays within the hive, does not allow the bees to be lazy, but she sends outside those bees who ought to work outside, and she knows what each of them brings into the house and receives it, and she keeps it until it is needed. When the time comes to use it, she sees that each bee gets her just share. (7.34) And she supervises those who weave the wax inside, and sees that they weave well and efficiently, and she looks after the young that are being born and sees that they are cared for. And when the little bees are grown and are ready to go to work, she sends them out with the leader of the new hive."

(7.35) "Will it then be my job", asked my wife, "to do this?"

"It will be your job", I said, "to remain indoors and to send out those of members of the household who must work outdoors, (7.36) and to supervise those who must work indoors, and to receive what is brought in and to allocate what each must spend, and you must decide what surplus needs to remain, and watch that the expenditure set aside for a year is not used up in a month. When fleeces are brought to you, you must take care that they become cloaks for those who need them. And you must take care that the grain that is stored remains edible.

17. WL-Chastity (A treatise attributed to Phintys, a female member of the Pythagorean community in southern Italy 3rd/2nd cent. B.C) (Thesleff, pp. 151-4:

"Now some people think that it is not appropriate for a woman to be a philosopher, just as a woman should not be a cavalry officer or a politician ... I agree that **men should be generals and city officials and politicians, and women should keep house and stay inside and receive and take care of their husbands. But I believe that courage, justice, and intelligence are qualities that men and women have in common ... Courage and intelligence are more appropriately male qualities because of the strength of men's bodies and the power of their minds. Chastity is more appropriately female....** Women of importance leave the house to sacrifice to the leading divinity of the community on behalf of themselves and their husbands and their households. **They do not leave home at night nor in the evening, but at midday, to attend a religious festival or to make some purchase, accompanied by a single female servant or decorously escorted by two servants at most.**"

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18. Sirach (Jewish wisdom from the early second-century BC, cited from the NAB)

Sirach 9:1-9 ¹ Be not jealous of the wife of your bosom, lest you teach her to do evil against you. ² Give no woman power over you to trample upon your dignity. ³ Be not intimate with a strange woman, lest you fall into her snares. ⁴ With a singing girl be not familiar, lest you be caught in her wiles. ⁵ ¹ Entertain no thoughts against a virgin, lest you be enmeshed in damages for her. ⁶ Give not yourself to harlots, lest you surrender your inheritance. ⁷ Gaze not about the lanes of the city and wander not through its squares; ⁸ Avert your eyes from a comely woman; gaze not upon the beauty of another's wife -- Through woman's beauty many perish, for lust for it burns like fire. ⁹ **With a married woman dine not, recline not at table to drink by her side,** Lest your heart be drawn to her and you go down in blood to the grave.

19. Sirach 23:16-27 ¹⁶ Two types of men multiply sins, a third draws down wrath; For burning passion is a blazing fire, not to be quenched till it burns itself out: A man given to sins of the flesh, who never stops until the fire breaks forth; ¹⁷ The rake to whom all bread is sweet and who is never through till he dies; ¹⁸ And the man who dishonors his marriage bed and says to himself "Who can see me? Darkness surrounds me, walls hide me; no one sees me; why should I fear to sin?" Of the Most High he is not mindful, ¹⁹ fearing only the eyes of men; He does not understand that the eyes of the LORD, ten thousand times brighter than the sun, Observe every step a man takes and peer into hidden corners. ²⁰ He who knows all things before they exist still knows them all after they are made. ²¹ Such a man will be punished in the streets of the city; when he least expects it, he will be apprehended. ²² So also with the woman who is unfaithful to her husband and offers as heir her son by a stranger. ²³ First, she has disobeyed the law of the Most High; secondly, she has wronged her husband; Thirdly, in her wanton adultery she has borne children by another man. ²⁴ Such a woman will be dragged before the assembly, and her punishment will extend to her children; ²⁵ Her children will not take root; her branches will not bring forth fruit. ²⁶ She will leave an accursed memory; her disgrace will never be blotted out. ²⁷ Thus all who dwell on the earth shall know, and all who inhabit the world shall understand, That nothing is better than the fear of the LORD, nothing more salutary than to obey his commandments.

20. Sirach 25:12-25 ¹² Worst of all wounds is that of the heart, worst of all evils is that of a woman. ¹³ Worst of all sufferings is that from one's foes, worst of all vengeance is that of one's enemies: ¹⁴ No poison worse than that of a serpent, no venom greater than that of a woman. ¹⁵ With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell than live with an evil woman. ¹⁶ Wickedness changes a woman's looks, and makes her sullen as a female bear. ¹⁷ When her husband sits among his neighbors, a bitter sigh escapes him unawares. ¹⁸ There is scarce any evil like that in a woman; may she fall to the lot of the sinner! ¹⁹ Like a sandy hill to aged feet is a railing wife to a quiet man. ²⁰ Stumble not through woman's beauty, nor be greedy for her wealth; ²¹ The man is a slave, in disgrace and shame, when a wife supports her husband. ²² Depressed mind, saddened face, broken heart -- this from an evil wife. Feeble hands and quaking knees -- from a wife who brings no happiness to her husband. ²³ **In woman was sin's beginning, and because of her we all die.** ²⁴ Allow water no outlet, and be not indulgent to an erring wife. ²⁵ **If she walks not by your side, cut her away from you.**

21. Sirach 41:18-24 (Be ashamed...) ²¹ Of gazing at a married woman, and of entertaining thoughts about another's wife; Of trifling with a servant girl you have, and of violating her

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couch; ²² Of using harsh words with friends, and of following up your gifts with insults; ²³ Of repeating what you hear, and of betraying secrets -- ²⁴ These are the things you should rightly avoid as shameful if you would be looked upon by everyone with favor.

22. Sirach 42:9-14 ⁹ A daughter is a treasure that keeps her father wakeful, and worry over her drives away rest: Lest she pass her prime unmarried, or when she is married, lest she be disliked; ¹⁰ While unmarried, lest she be seduced, or, as a wife, lest she prove unfaithful; Lest she conceive in her father's home, or be sterile in that of her husband. ¹¹ Keep a close watch on your daughter, lest she make you the sport of your enemies, A byword in the city, a reproach among the people, an object of derision in public gatherings. See that there is no lattice in her room, no place that overlooks the approaches to the house. ¹² **Let her not parade her charms before men, or spend her time with married women;** ¹³ For just as moths come from garments, so harm to women comes from women: ¹⁴ Better a man's harshness than a woman's indulgence, and a frightened daughter than any disgrace.

23. Sirach 47:18-21 [addressing Solomon] ¹⁸ You were called by that glorious name which was conferred upon Israel. Gold you gathered like so much iron, you heaped up silver as though it were lead; ¹⁹ But you abandoned yourself to women and **gave them dominion over your body.** ²⁰ You brought dishonor upon your reputation, shame upon your marriage, Wrath upon your descendants, and groaning upon your domain; ²¹ Thus two governments came into being, when in Ephraim kingship was usurped.

24. Testament of Reuben 5:1-5; 6:1 [Second century B.C.; translation of H. C. Kee; *OTP* 1:784] **For women are evil, my children, and by reason of their lacking authority or power over man, they scheme treacherously how they might entice him to themselves by means of their looks.** And whomever they cannot enchant by their appearance they conquer by a stratagem. Indeed, the angel of the Lord told me and instructed me that **women are more easily overcome by the spirit of promiscuity than are men.** They contrive in their hearts against men, then by decking themselves out they lead men's mind astray, by a look they implant their poison, and finally in the act itself they take them captive. For a woman is not able to coerce a man overtly, but **by a harlot's manner she accomplishes her villainy.** Accordingly, my children, flee from sexual promiscuity, and **order your wives and your daughters not to adorn their heads and their appearances so as to deceive men's sound minds.** For every woman who schemes in these ways is destined for eternal punishment.... So guard yourself against sexual promiscuity, and if you want to remain pure in your mind, protect your senses from women.

25. 4Q416 Frag. 2 col. III 20-IV 8²

"If you would marry a wife in your poverty, take her from the Children of [Light (?)...] ²¹ from the secret of the way things are. When you are united, live together with your fleshly helper [... For as the verse says, 'A man should leave] **Col. 4** ¹ his father and mother [and adhere to his wife and they will become one flesh' (Gen. 2:24).] ² **He has made you ruler over her so [...]** ³ God did not give [her father] authority over her, He has separated her from her mother, and unto you [He has given authority ... He has made your wife] ⁴ and you into one flesh. Later, He will take

² Cited from *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* by Michael O. Wise, Martin Abegg Jr. and Edward Cook (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 385.

your daughter away and give her to another, and your sons [...] ⁵ But you, live together with the wife of your bosom, for she is the kin of [...] ⁶ Whosoever governs her before you has ‘shifted the boundary’ of his life [...] ⁷ **He has made you ruler over her, for her to live the way you want her to**, not making any vows or offerings [...] ⁸ Turn her spirit to your will and every binding oath [...]”

26. Gaius Valerius Catullus (Roman poet, 1st century B.C.), *Carmina* Excerpts from Poem 61.³

“Advance, new bride, it now seems right, and listen to our speech. See how the torches shake their glittering tresses: advance, new bride. Nor is your man a fickle husband, given to ill adulteries, seeking shameful acts of dishonor, ever wishing to lie away from your soft breasts. But as the lithe vine among neighboring trees doth cling, so shall he be enclasped in your embrace. But day slips by: advance, new bride.

They will say when [you] the bridegroom has been anointed that you can scarce abstain from your hairless boys: but abstain! We know that these delights were known to you only when lawful: but to the wedded these same no more are lawful.

You also, bride, **what your husband seeks beware of denying, lest he go elsewhere in search of it**. Look, your husband's home is yours, influential and goodly; be content to be mistress here until white-haired old age, shaking your trembling brow, nods assent to everything. Look! your husband alone within, lying on Tyrian couch, all-expectant waits for you. No less than in yours, in his breast burns an inmost flame, but more deeply inward.

You have not delayed for long, now you are coming. Kindly Venus will help you, since what you desire you take publicly, and do not conceal true love. Play as you like, and speedily give heirs. It does not become so old a name to be without children, but from similar stock always to be generated. A little Torquatus [son] I wish, from his mother's lap reaching out his dainty hands, and smiling sweetly at his father with lips apart. **May he be like his father Manlius, and easily acknowledged by every stranger, and by his face point out his mother's faithfulness**. May such praise confirm his birth from true mother, such fame as rests only with Telemachus from best of mothers, Penelope.

Close the doors, virgins: enough we've played. But, fair bride and groom, live you well, and diligently fulfill the office of vigorous youth.

27. WL-Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.5.1-10. ca. A.D. 400. Tr. H. Lloyd-Jones. L) (About the wit of Julia, Augustus' wayward daughter in 1st cent. BC Rome)

“Here is another well-known story. At a gladiatorial show Livia and Julia drew the attention of the people by the dissimilarity of their companions; Livia was surrounded by respectable men, Julia by men who were not only youthful but extravagant. Her father wrote that she ought to

³ A wedding song which, as was traditional, was sung to Hymenaeus, also called Hymen, who was the Greek god of marriage and the patron of women and maidens. I have removed the refrain “Io Hymen Hymenaeus io, io Hymen Hymenaeus!” which appears at the end of many of the lines. The translation is that of Leonard C. Smithers, slightly altered.

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notice the difference between the two princesses, but Julia wittily wrote back, ‘**These men will be old when I am old’.**’

28. WL-Valerius Maximus (Early 1st cent. A.D), *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.7.1-3. L) on husbands' punishment of wives in early Rome:

“There was also the harsh marital severity of Gaius Sulpicius Gallus [Roman Consul in 166 B.C.]. **He divorced his wife because he had caught her outdoors with her head uncovered:** a stiff penalty, but not without a certain logic. ‘The law,’ he said, ‘prescribes for you my eyes alone to which you may prove your beauty. **For these eyes you should provide the ornaments of beauty, for these be lovely: entrust yourself to their more certain knowledge. If you, with needless provocation, invite the look of anyone else, you must be suspected of wrongdoing.**’

Quintus Antistius Vetus felt no differently when **he divorced his wife because he had seen her in public having a private conversation with a common freedwoman.** For, moved not by an actual crime but, so to speak, by the birth and nourishment of one, he punished her before the crime could be committed, so that he might prevent the deed's being done at all, rather than punish it afterwards.

To these we should add the case of Publius Sempronius Sophus [Consul in 268 B.C.] who **disgraced his wife with divorce merely because she dared attend the games without his knowledge.** And so, long ago, when the misdeeds of women were thus forestalled, their minds stayed far from wrongdoing.

Tertia Aemilia, the wife of Scipio Africanus and the mother of Cornelia, was **a woman of such kindness and patience that, although she knew that her husband was carrying on with a little serving girl, she looked the other way**, [as she thought it unseemly for] a woman to prosecute her great husband, Africanus, a conqueror of the world, for a dalliance. So little was she interested in revenge that, after Scipio's death, she freed the girl and gave her in marriage to one of her own freedmen.⁴

29. Epitaph attributed to Marcus Argentarius (first century BC to first century AD):
“Psyllus, who used to take to the pleasant banquets of the young men the venal ladies that they desired ... who earned a disgraceful wage by dealing in human flesh, lies here. But cast not those stones.... Spare him, not because he was content to gain his living so, but because **as keeper of common women he dissuaded young men from adultery.**”⁵

30. Cornelius Nepos (Roman biographer, c. 100-24 BC), *De viris illustribus* preface.7:
“Many actions are seemly according to our [Roman] code which the Greeks look upon as shameful. For instance, what Roman would blush to take his wife to a dinner-party? What

⁴ On the experience of slaves in the world of the New Testament compare Shelly Matthews' review of Glancy's description of “the bodily implications of slavery in the ancient world”: “These bodies, if gendered female, were subject as a matter of course to sexual penetration and were used as breeders, milk producers, and sexual surrogates for modest wives. These bodies, if gendered male, were also subject to sexual abuse and daily incidental violence” (Review of *Slavery in Early Christianity*, by Jennifer A. Glancy [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002] in *JBL* 122 [2003] 779 (http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/3058_3324.pdf [page 2]).

⁵ Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 56-57, citing *Anth. Graec.* 7.403.

matron does not frequent the front rooms of her dwelling and show herself in public? But it is very different in Greece; for there a woman is not admitted to a dinner-party, unless relatives only are present, and she keeps to the more retired part of the house called “the women’s apartment,” to which no man has access who is not near of kin.”

31. Philo⁶ (early first century AD), *On the Creation* 104 cites the Greek Solon’s artificial division of a man’s life in periods of 7 years [following (see *On the Creation* 104)], in which he suggests that men should marry in the 5th seven-year phase of their lives:

And Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, described these different ages in the following elegiac verses:—

In seven years from th’ earliest breath,
When strengthened by a similar span,
As in a third, his limbs increase,
When he has passed a fourth such time,
When five times seven years o’er his head
At forty two, the wisdom’s clear
While seven times seven years to sense
And seven years further skill admit
When nine such periods have passed,
When God has granted ten times seven,

The child puts forth his hedge of teeth;
He first displays some signs of man.
A beard buds o’er his changing face.
His strength and vigour’s in its prime.
Have passed, the man should think to wed;
To shun vile deed of folly or fear:
Add ready wit and eloquence.
To raise them to their perfect height.
His powers, though milder grown, still last;
The aged man prepares for heaven.

32. Philo (early first century Jewish philosopher), *Leg.* 2:5

“But the second kind of man [the earthly man-whose descendants we are] has a helpmeet for him, who, in the first place, is created; “For I will make him,” says God, “a help-meet for him.” And, in the second place, is **younger than the object to be helped**; for, first of all, God created the mind, and subsequently he prepares to make its helper.”

33. Philo (early first century Jewish philosopher), *Spec.* 1:106-107

“But the woman who has had experience of another husband is very naturally less inclined to obedience and to instruction, inasmuch as she has not a soul perfectly pure, like thoroughly smooth wax, so as to receive distinctly the doctrines which are to be impressed upon it, but one which is to a certain degree rough from the impressions which have been already stamped upon it, which are difficult to be effaced, and so remain, and do not easily receive any other impression, or if they do they render it confused by the irregularity of their own surface. Let the high priest, therefore, take a pure virgin to be his wife.”

34. Philo (early first century Jewish philosopher), *QG* 1.27 (Loeb edition)

Philo, in explaining why the woman was made from the man instead of from the earth (like the man) answers “First, because **woman is not equal in honour with man**. Second, because **she is not equal in age, but younger**. Wherefore those who take wives who have passed their prime are to be criticized for destroying the laws of nature. Third, he wishes that man should take care of woman as of a very necessary part of him; but **woman, in return, should serve him as a whole**. Fourth, **he counsels man figuratively to take care of woman as of a daughter, and**

⁶ Philo is cited according to the translation of Charles Duke Yonge (with occasional alterations).

woman to honour man as a father.” Furthermore, the woman “should give to him who has taken her the honour which she showed those who begot her.”

35. Philo (early first century Jewish philosopher), *Spec. 3:169-171*

“(169) Market places, and council chambers, and courts of justice, and large companies and assemblies of numerous crowds, and a life in the open air full of arguments and actions relating to war and peace, are suited to men; but **taking care of the house and remaining at home are the proper duties of women; the virgins having their apartments in the centre of the house within the innermost doors, and the full-grown women not going beyond the vestibule and outer courts;** (170) for there are two kinds of states, the greater and the smaller. And the larger ones are called cities; but the smaller ones are called households. And the superintendence and management of these is allotted to the two sexes separately; the men having the government of the greater, which government is called statesmanship; and the women that of the smaller, which is called household management. (171) Therefore let no woman busy herself about those things which are beyond the province of household management, but let her cultivate solitude, and **not be seen to be going about like a woman who walks the streets in the sight of other men, except when it is necessary for her to go to the temple, if she has any proper regard for herself; and even then let her not go at noon when the market is full, but after the greater part of the people have returned home;** like a well-born woman, a real and true citizen, performing her vows and her sacrifices in tranquillity, so as to avert evils and to receive blessings.”

36. Dio Chrysostom (Greek sophist and orator, c. 40 AD–c. 120 AD) claimed that many of his contemporaries thought prostitution was a “wonderful elixir to produce chastity in our cities, your motive to keep those open and unbarred brothels from contaminating your barred homes and inner chambers, and keep men who practice their excesses abroad and openly at little cost from turning to your free-born [eleuthera] and respected wives!”⁷

37. WL-Pliny the Younger (AD 62??-113??), *Letters*, Book 1 letter XVI (Trans. John B. Firth)

To Erucius.

I used to be very fond of Pompeius Saturninus--our Saturninus, as I may call him--and to admire his intellectual powers, even before I knew him; they were so varied, so supple, so many-sided; but now I am devoted to him body and soul... Moreover, he writes verses that Catullus or Calvus might have composed... A little while ago he read me some letters which he declared had been written by his wife. I thought, on hearing them, that they were either Plautus or Terence in prose, and whether they were composed, as he said, by his wife or by himself, as he denies, **his credit is the same. It belongs to him either as the actual author of the letters or as the teacher who has made such a polished and learned lady of his wife--whom he married when she was a girl.**

38. WL-Pliny the Younger (AD 105/6), *Letters* 5.16. L263. The death of Minicia Marcella. Rome:

⁷ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 57, citing Dio Chrys., *Or. 7.140.*

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To Aefulanus Marcellinus.

I could not be more sad as I write you that our friend Fundanus has lost his younger daughter. I've never seen anyone more cheerful or agreeable or worthy of a long life-even immortality-than that girl. **She was just under fourteen** but was as wise as an old woman and as sedate as a matron without losing her girlish sweet and virginal modesty. How she would throw her arms around her father's neck! How she loved her nurses and pedagogues and teachers for the services they provided her! How studiously and intelligently she read, and how sparingly she played! She suffered her last illness with such sobriety, patience, and constancy. She did as she was told by the doctors, and she cheered up her sister and her father. When her body could no longer support her, her spirit went on till the last, broken neither by the illness itself nor fear of death-all the more reason why her loss is so great. Her death is all the more bitter for its timing. **She was engaged to marry an excellent young man. The date was set and we were all invited.** But our joy was changed to sorrow.

39. Plutarch (AD 45-125), *The Dialogue on Love* 752-754 (from the Loeb edition).

Debating the appropriateness of the interest of an older/richer/nobler woman in marrying a handsome boy (very young man):

752F Pisias (an older man who had his own sexual interest in the boy): "... as for this woman, **we can see her determination to rule and to dominate** (ἀρχεῖν καὶ κρατεῖν). Otherwise she would hardly have rejected so many eminent, noble and wealthy suitors and be wooing a stripling who has not yet discarded his school uniform, who still needs a tutor."

753A Protogenes (another man against the idea): "we risk being silly and ridiculous to reverse the words of Hesiod if, though he says,

*No marriage much before the age of thirty,
Nor much after it: this time's the ripe one;
Let a wife be matured four years, married the fifth—*

if, I say, we are going to join a green, immature man to a woman as many years older than he as the bridegroom should be older than the bride—and so follow the example of those who artificially pollinate dates and figs."

754 C-D Plutarch: "The right age and proper time for marriage are suitably matched as long as both parties are able to procreate. I understand that the lady is in the prime of life, for " (he added with a smile at Pisias) "she is no older than any of her rivals; nor is her hair grey as is that of some of the gentlemen who try to give their own colour to Bacchon. If they are young enough to frequent his company, what is to hinder her from looking after the young man better than any young wife in the world? It is true that young people find it difficult to fuse and blend well with each other. Only after a long time do they abandon their stiffness and self-assertion. At the beginning they have stormy weather and a struggle with their partners—and still more so if Love is involved. Just as a high wind upsets a boat without a pilot, so **Love makes stormy and chaotic a marriage of two people when both are unable to rule and also unwilling to be ruled** (ἀρχεῖν δυναμένων οὐτ' ἀρχεσθαι βουλομένων). The nurse rules the infant, the teacher the boy, the gymnasiarch the youth, his admirer the young man who, when he comes of age, is ruled by law and his commanding general. No one is his own master, no one is

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unrestricted. Since this is so, **what is there dreadful about a sensible older woman piloting the life of her young husband?** She will be useful because of her superior understanding ($\tau\bar{\omega}$ φρονεῖν μᾶλλον); she will be sweet and affectionate because she loves him ($\tau\bar{\omega}$ φιλεῖν)."

40. Plutarch (AD 45-125), *Moralia* – Advice to Bride and Groom⁸

(From Loeb 139 A) "**Women who prefer to have power over fools rather than hearken to sensible men**, are like persons who prefer to guide the blind on the road rather than follow persons possessed of knowledge and sight."

(From Loeb 139 C) "Whenever the moon is at a distance from the sun we see her conspicuous and brilliant, but she disappears and hides herself when she comes near him. Contrariwise **a virtuous woman ought to be most visible in her husband's company and hide herself when he is away.**"

"Rich men and kings who honor philosophers adorn both themselves and their beneficiaries; but philosophers courting the rich do nothing to increase the reputation of these people, but merely diminish their own. It is the same with wives. **If they submit to their husbands, they are praised. If they try to rule (κρατεῖν) them, they cut a worse figure than their subjects. But the husband should rule the wife, not as a master rules a slave, but as the soul rules the body**, sharing her feelings and growing together with her in affection. That is the just way. One can care for one's body without being a slave to its pleasures and desires; and **one can rule (ἀρχεῖν) a wife while giving her enjoyment and kindness.**"

"When music is played in two parts, it is the bass part which carries the melody. Similarly, every action performed in a good household is done by the agreement of the partners, but displays the rule and decision of the husband. (ἐπιφαίνει δὲ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἡγεμονίαν καὶ προαίρεσιν)" (139D)

"**When Persian kings dine, their legal wives sit beside them and share the feast. But if they want to amuse themselves or get drunk, they send their wives away, and summon the singing-girls and the concubines. And they are quite right not to share their drunken orgies with their wives.** (140b): **So if a private citizen, incontinent and dissolute in regard to his pleasures, commits some peccadillo with a paramour or a slave girl, his wedded wife ought not to be indignant or angry, but she should reason that it is respect for her which leads him to share his debauchery, licentiousness, and wantonness with another woman.**' A wife ought not to make friends of her own but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all strange rituals and outlandish superstitions. (140D).

⁸ Except where otherwise indicated the English translation is from Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, and *A Consolation to His Wife: English Translations, Commentary, Interpretive Essays, and Bibliography*, edited by Sarah B. Pomeroy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Greek texts are from the TLG.

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“Theano, in putting her cloak about her, exposed her arm. Somebody exclaimed, ‘A lovely arm.’ ‘But **not for the public**,’ said she. **Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her speech as well, ought to be not for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded about saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself; for in her talk can be seen her feelings, character, and disposition.** Pheidias made the Aphrodite of the Eleans with one foot on a tortoise, to typify for womankind keeping at home and keeping silence. For **a woman ought to do her talking either to her husband or through her husband, and she should not feel aggrieved if, like the flute-player, she makes a more impressive sound through a tongue not her own.**” (142C–D).

A young Spartan girl was once asked whether she had yet started making advances to her husband. She replied: 'I don't to him; he does to me.' This, I think, is how a married woman ought to behave—not to shrink away or object when her husband starts to make love, but not herself to be the one to start either. In the one case she is being over-eager like a prostitute, in the other she is being cold and lacking in affection."

“Gather whatever is valuable from every quarter, like a bee; carry it within yourself, share it with your wife, discuss it with her, making the best arguments her friends and familiars. You are her ‘father’ and her ‘lady mother’ and her ‘brother’,¹ but it is a finer thing still for a man to hear his wife say ‘My dear husband, **you are my guide and philosopher, my teacher** (καθηγητής καὶ φιλόσοφος καὶ διδάσκαλος) of the noblest and finest lessons.’ In the first place these studies will take away a woman’s appetite for stupid and irrational pursuits. A woman who is studying geometry will be ashamed to go dancing and one who is charmed by the words of Plato or Xenophon is not going to pay any attention to magic incantations. For **if they do not receive the seed of a good education and do not develop this education in company with their husbands they will, left to themselves, conceive a lot of ridiculous ideas and unworthy aims and emotions.** [¹ A reference to Iliad 6.429, where Andromache tells Hector ‘But to me you are father and mother and brother, and you are my strong husband.’]

From his *Table-Talk*: “Households are chiefly well ordered when the wife does not make a fuss over the undeclared plans of her husband nor without his counsel undertakes to do anything.”

41. Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 22b (Soncino edition)

“R. Samuel b. Unya said in the name of Rab [3rd century]: ‘**Before marriage a woman is a shapeless lump. It is her husband who transforms her into a useful vessel**, as it is written: For your maker is your husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name’” (Isaiah 54:5).

Marriage contracts/certificates⁹

42. Greek marriage contract, AD 66, Bacchias, Egypt (*P.Ryl. II 154*):

[Time, Place]. H acknowledges to WF that he has received from him as a dowry on his daughter W who has previously been living with H as his wife, [list of dowry], and as *parapherna* [list of wife's personal belongings], and without valuation in usufruct and as a gift from the current year, [a field, described in detail]. Wherefore let the parties to the marriage, W and H, live together blamelessly as they have previously been doing, H conducting all the agricultural work of each year on [the field]. If a difference (διαφορᾶς) arise between them and they separate from each other ([χ]ωρίζονται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων), whether H sends away (ἀποπέμποντος) W or she voluntarily leaves him (έκουσίω[ς ἀ]) παλλασσομέν[η]ς [ἀ]π' ἀντοῦ), [the field] shall belong to WF or, if he is no longer alive, to W. And H shall moreover return to her the aforesaid dowry and the *parapherna* in whatever state they may eventually be through wear, in the case of dismissal (ἀποπομπῆς) immediately, and in the case of her voluntary departure (έκουσ[ίο]ν ἀπαλλαγῆς) within 30 days of demand. In whatever year the separation (χ]ωρ[ι]σμό[ν]) of the parties to the marriage takes place, the proceeds of the holding for the 12 months of the year of the divorce ([ἀ]ποπλοκῆς) shall be divided [more details]. To enforce the terms of the contract WF or, if he is no longer alive, W and those for her shall have the right of execution upon H and all his property as if by legal decision. The signatory is WF, H being illiterate.

43. Greek marriage certificate, 92 BC, Tebtunis, Egypt (*P.Tebt.I.104*):

[Date, Place]. H acknowledges to W, having with her as guardian WB that he has received from her [money], the dowry for herself, W, agreed upon with him. W shall live with H, obeying him (πειθαρχουσα αύτοῦ) as a wife should (ώς προσῆ[κο]ν ἐστιν) her husband, owning their property in common with him. H shall supply to W all necessities (δέοντα π[ά]ντα) and clothing ([ήμ]ατισμὸν) and whatever is proper for a wedded wife, (τὰλλα ὄσα προσήκει γυναικὶ γαμετῆι) whether he is at home or abroad, according to their means (κατὰ δύναμιν τῶν). **It shall not be lawful for H to bring in any other wife but W, nor to keep a concubine or boy, nor to have children by another woman while W lives (ζώσ[η]ς), nor to live in another house over which W is not mistress, nor to eject or insult or ill-treat her, nor to alienate any of their property to W's disadvantage. If he is proved to be doing any of these things or does not supply her with necessities (δέοντα) and clothing (ίατισμὸν) and the rest as stated, H shall forfeit forthwith to W the dowry [money]. In the same way it shall not be lawful for W to spend the night or day away from the house of H without H's consent or to have intercourse with another man or to dishonor the common household or to bring shame upon H in anything that causes a husband shame.¹⁰** If W wishes of her own will to separate (έκουσαβούλη[ται] ἀπαλλασσεσθαι) from H, H shall repay her the bare

⁹ The following marriage contracts are excerpted from David Instone-Brewer's articles "1 Corinthians 7 in the light of the Graeco-Roman Marriage and Divorce Papyri" *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001) 101-116; and "1 Corinthians 7 in the light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri" *Tyndale Bulletin* 52 (2001) 225-243. [H=husband; W=wife; WF=wife's father, etc.]

¹⁰ The Greek of the last clauses (from "or to have intercourse") is μηδ' ἄλλω[ι] ἀνδρ[ι] συνεῖναι μηδὲ φθε[ί]σειν τὸν κοινὸν οἶκον μηδὲ αἰσχύνεσθ[αι] Φιλίσκον [↔H] ὄσα φέρει ἀνδρὶ αἰσχύνην.

dowry within ten days from the day it is demanded back. If he does not repay it as stated he shall forthwith forfeit the dowry he has received increased by one half. [Witnesses]

44. Jewish marriage contract, AD 128, Petra (P.Yadin.18):

[Date, Place], WF gave over W, his very own daughter, a virgin, to H, for W at be a wedded wife to H for the partnership of marriage according to the laws, she bringing to him on account of bridal gift feminine adornment in silver and gold and clothing appraised by mutual agreement as they both say, to be worth 200 denarii of silver, which appraised value H acknowledged that he has received from her by hand forthwith from WF and that he owes to W together with another 300 denarii which he promised to give to her in addition to the sum of her aforesaid bridal gift ($\pi\varrho\sigma\phi\varrho\alpha$), all accounted toward her dowry, pursuant to his undertaking of feeding and clothing both her and the children to come in accordance with Greek law ($\varepsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\nu\kappa\omega$ νόμω) upon H's good faith ($\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\zeta$) and in peril and the security of all his possessions, both those which he now possesses in his said home village and here and all those which he may in addition validly acquire everywhere, in whatever manner W may choose, or whoever acts through her or for her may choose, to carry out the execution. H shall redeem this contract for W whenever she may demand it ($\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\tau\eta\sigma[\epsilon\iota]$) of him, in silver secured in due form, at his own expense interposing no objection. If not, he shall pay to her all the aforesaid denarii twofold, she having the right of execution, both from H and upon the possessions validly his, in whatever manner WW or whoever acts through her or for her may choose to carry out the execution. In good faith ($\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$) the formal question was asked and it was acknowledged in reply that this is thus rightly done.

I, WF, have given my daughter W, a virgin, in marriage to H, according to what is written above. WF wrote it.

I, H, acknowledge the debt of silver denarii, 500, the dowry of W according to what they wrote above. H wrote it.

I [name of scribe] wrote this.

[Witness signatures].

“Womanly Weakness” in Roman Law, in the Papyri and other ancient sources¹¹

45. Plato, *Republic* 5.457a-β (from the Perseus Project)

“The women of the guardians, then, must strip, since they will be clothed with virtue as a garment, and must take their part with the men in war and the other duties of civic guardianship and have no other occupation. But in these very duties lighter tasks must be assigned to the women than to the men because of their weakness as a class ($\delta\iota\alpha\tau\eta\tau\eta\tau\eta\alpha$ τὴν τοῦ γένους $\alpha\sigma\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota\alpha\eta$).

¹¹ Except where indicated otherwise the following texts have been excerpted from Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002) 51-54, where much more can be found on the subject.

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46. Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 4:223 (Yonge's translation):

“But let them allow the maidens and the women to go free, inasmuch as they did not expect to suffer any of the evils which war brings upon men at their hands, as they are exempt from all military service through their natural weakness (φυσικῆς ἀσθενείας).

47. De vita Mosis 1:8 (Yonge's translation):

“The king ... ordered that of all the children that were born the females only should be brought up (since a woman, by reason of the weakness of her nature [φύσεως ἀσθένειαν], is disinclined to and unfitted for war).”

48. Josephus Ant. 14.480 (= War 1:352) (Whiston's translation)

“... so they were murdered continually in the narrow streets and in the houses by crowds, and as they were fleeing to the temple for shelter, and there was no pity taken on either infants or the aged, nor did they spare so much as the weaker sex (ἀσθενείας γυναικῶν – literally, “the weakness of women”).

49. P. Oxy. 2.261 (AD 55)

“.... Not being able to be in attendance in court on account of womanly weakness (διὰ γυναικείαν ἀσθένειαν), (Demetria agrees) that she has appointed the aforementioned grandson Chaeremon as her legal representative, before every authority and every court....”

50. P. Oxy. 34.2713 (c. AD 297)

“You know quite well, my lord governor, that the race of women is easily despised on account of the weakness of our nature (ότι τὸ γυναικείον γένος] εὐκαταφρόνητον πέφυκεν διὰ τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές).”

51. P. Oxy. 1.71 (AD 303)

“To Clodius Culcianus, the most eminent prefect of Egypt, from Aurelia Gl..., most illustrious, living in the city of the Arsinoites. You come to the aid of all, lord governor, and you render to all their own, especially to women on account of the weakness of their nature ([μάλιστα] δὲ γυναιξὶν διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές). For this reason I too approach your greatness....”

52. Chrest.Mitt. 95.4 (4th century) (from the Duke Database of Documentary Papyri)

The woman is not appearing before the court personally but is being represented by those who care for her “for the woman is not able due to the weakness of the female nature (ἀδύνατος γάρ ἐστιν ἡ γυνὴ διὰ ἀσθένειαν τῆς φύσεως[ως]).”

53. Gaius, *Institutes* (2nd century AD) I.144

“For the ancients wanted women, even if they are of full age, to be in *tutela*¹² because of their lightmindedness (*animi levitas*).”

54. Gaius, *Institutes* (2nd century AD) I.190

“However, almost no reason of value appears to recommend that women of full age be in *tutela*. For the reason which is commonly believed, that since they are very often deceived due to their lightmindedness, it was right for them to be ruled by the authority of tutors, seems to be specious rather than true”

¹² *Tutela* = guardianship, to be under the guardianship of a father, husband, uncle or other man.

55. Rules of Ulpian (early 4th century) II.I

"Guardians (*tutores*) are appointed for both males and females, but for males only as long as they are below puberty, on account of the weakness of their age; however, for females both below puberty and above, both on account of the weakness of their sex (*sexus infimitas*) and on account of their ignorance of legal affairs."

Key Old Testament Texts (see also the treatment of Deborah, Ruth, Esther, etc.)

56. Genesis 1:26-28 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

57. Genesis 2:8-3:20 ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.... ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. ^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the

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man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." ¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." ¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." ²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Key New Testament Texts (cited from the ESV)

58. Acts 18:24-26 ²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

59. Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, ² that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

60. Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to [RSV prominent among] the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

61. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

62. 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, ⁵ but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is the same as if her head were shaven. ⁶ For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is

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disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head.⁷ For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.⁸ For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.⁹ Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.¹⁰ That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman;¹² for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

63. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 ³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

64. Galatians 3:27-29 ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

65. Ephesians 5:21-33 (note the teaching on the Christian household includes parents-children and masters-slaves, only the husband-wife part is included here) ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,³⁰ because we are members of his body.³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

66. Philippians 4:2-3 ² I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.³ Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

67. Colossians 3:18-19 (note the teaching on the Christian household includes parents-children and masters-slaves, only the husband-wife part is included here) ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

68. 1 Timothy 2:8-15 ⁸ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;⁹ likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,¹⁰ but with what is proper for women who profess godliness--with good works.¹¹

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Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve;¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

69. Titus 2:1-6 ¹ But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.² Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

70. 1 Peter 2:17-3:8 ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.^{3:1} Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives--² when they see your respectful and pure conduct.³ Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing--⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands,⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

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