

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

8 November 2015

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

I will pray for my church leaders

A.M. Lesson:

By what authority? (Matthew 21:23-27)

P.M. Lesson:

Today this scripture has been fulfilled (Luke 4:16-30)

Wednesday:

With the tongue we praise and curse (James 3:9-12)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

***Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.***

Your desire shall be for your husband, Genesis 3:16

Neil Short

Believe it or not, scholars are not in full agreement on how to translate the Hebrew word *teshuqah* in Genesis 3:16. The most common way the word is translated is "desire." One scholar, Susan T. Foh, has offered that the word ought to be translated in a way that conveys the idea of desiring to control. That is, the woman has a tendency to want to dominate her husband. Foh's work seems to have influenced the New English Translation, quoted below after the more traditional New Revised Standard Version.

NRSV: To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

NET: To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your labor pains; with pain you will give birth to children. You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you."

As we analyze this passage, it is important for us to understand that the things God says to the woman in this verse are things that are consequences of her sin. It

is not a blessing and it is not some kind of role she is expected to embrace.

For comparison, let's look at what God said to the man as a consequence of his sin.

And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19, NRSV).

One consequence of sin is that the ground will now resist growing crops. If the man can plow his field with an air-conditioned plow, should he resist and rather use a wooden handled shovel? If a farmer is trying to grow potatoes in Idaho (which, I understand, are very easy to grow in that particular state), should he try to find a way to make potato farming more difficult? Obviously not. Just because making a living is more difficult after Genesis 3:17-19 does not mean that man is somehow failing God if he finds an easier way to do his work. What about the woman? If a woman does not embrace whatever Genesis 3:16 means then is she failing as a

woman? The context resists that conclusion.

Therefore, some of the explanations for *teshuqah* don't make a whole lot of sense. One explanation is that the woman will desire to be married and have a family. How is that a consequence of sin? It is a good thing to want to be married and have children. Maybe we should think, if not for this desire for her husband, she would avoid having children—after all, having them is painful (without drugs). It does not make sense that desiring her husband would be a consequence of sin.

Another explanation is that what she desires is sexual activity with her husband. The Bible presents marital sexual activity as a beautiful thing (Song of Songs) and as something to NOT be avoided (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). Such an interpretation does not make sense as a consequence for sin.

The NET and NLT translations follow Foh's view that the woman will have a natural tendency (that should be resisted) to control her husband. Thus, the kind of control she attempts to exert on her husband, and the kind of rule her husband exerts on her are consequences of the first couple's sin. That approach does satisfy the expectation that everything God said to the woman was a real consequence of her sin. This view is reflected in the New King James Version Study Bible notes on Genesis 3:16.

The word **desire** can also mean "an attempt to usurp or control" as in [Genesis] 4:7. We can paraphrase the last two lines of this verse this way: "You will now have a tendency to dominate your husband, and he will have a tendency to act as a tyrant over you." The battle of the sexes has begun. Each strives for control and neither lives in the best interest of the other (see Philippians 2:3, 4). The antidote is in the restoration of mutual respect and dignity through Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 5:21-33).

There is one final bit of study we should acknowledge. The evidence is very strong that "desire" is a pretty poor translation of the Hebrew *teshuqah*. Walter Kaiser reference book, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, digs quite deeply into this word as it appears in Genesis 3:16. He effectively argues for the concept of "turning."

The Hebrew word *teshuqah*, now almost universally translated as 'desire,' was previously rendered as 'turning.' The word appears in the Hebrew Old Testament only three times: here in Genesis 3:16, in Genesis 4:7

and in Song of Songs 7:10. Of the twelve known ancient versions (the Greek Septuagint, the Syriac Peshitta, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Old Latin, the Sahidic, the Bohairic, the Ethiopic, the Arabic, Aquila's Greek, Symmachus's Greek, Theodotion's Greek and the Latin Vulgate), almost every one (twenty-one out of twenty-eight times) renders these three instances of *teshuqah* as "turning," not "desire." Likewise, the church fathers (Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Epiphanius and Jerome, along with Philo, a Jew who died about A.D. 50) seem to be ignorant of any other sense for this word *teshuqah* than the translation of "turning." Furthermore, the Latin rendering was *conversio* and the Greek was *apostrophē* or *epistrophē*, words all meaning "a turning" ("3:16 How was the Woman Punished?", *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 96).

All of the consequences mankind suffers because of sin are things we generally try to avoid. We try to make our work easier, even though difficult work is a consequence of sin. We try to make our lives longer (good diet and exercise) even though we return to the ground as a consequence of sin. We try to minimize the pain of childbirth even though painful childbirth is a consequence of sin. We try to have peaceful marriages, even though difficult marriage is a consequence of sin.

News:

Jacey is recovering from back surgery.
John Cunningham has cancer and he is considering treatment options.
Tamara Richards was hurt in a traffic accident.

Extended prayer list:

Norma Robinson—health
Robin Richards—severe back pain
Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration
H.L. Boling—general health and complications from leukemia
Mike Cavasos—chronic pain, foot issues, sinus issues
Sandy Cavasos—degenerative disk disease

Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs

Neil Short, editor. neshort@yahoo.com. <http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>

