

THE SQUIRM FACTOR.

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It was early 2005, and I was sitting, listening as a minister spoke at my nephew's wedding. In front of me, sat a man I knew to be the minister of a Pentecostal church. The presiding minister, knowing that there are diverse views on how a marriage should function, bravely brought up the subject of 'roles' within a marriage.

I had noticed the minister sitting in front of me being somewhat fidgety during the course of the message. However, at the mention of the word 'roles', his head suddenly dropped, his shoulders slumped, and he let out a quiet sigh. We were to hear later that there was nothing kind or positive that this minister had to say about the message, or in fact, the whole ceremony.

Why is it that we can happily accept that there are **biblical parameters** that help us **determine** the **role** and **calling** of a Pastor, of an elder, of a Teacher, of a deacon. Why is it that we can use those same parameters to help us determine whether or not someone is **functioning** in their called role to be a fruitful member of the Body. Yet, why is it that as soon as we talk about the '*role*' of a husband, or the '*role*' of a wife, the 'squirm factor' sets in. The hairs on the back of so many necks begin to prickle and emotions are raised?

Why is it that we can speak of the 'role and calling' of a King, the role and calling of a Diplomat, of a Clerk, of a Professor of Linguistics, a Personal Assistant, an Archaeologist, a Cleaner, a Bricklayer, of a Student, an Adult, a Child - and yet be **allergic** to the fact that there is a 'role and calling' for a husband, and a 'role and calling' for a wife? The 'squirm factor' sets in and everything in most of us wants to resist the very concept.

Guidelines and parameters are in place to help define and clarify. How would we know what an Archaeologist is if there were no parameters to define such a vocation? How would an Archaeologist know his field of endeavour if his calling were not defined? How would he learn research skills if left to his own devices? Some progress may be made by trial and error, but how much better to begin with a solid base of **understanding** his vocation and of **being trained** in the skills specific to that role. The more clearly defined the 'role and calling' of the Archaeologist is, the greater the understanding and the more effective the training.

Each vocation or calling demands understanding, knowledge and skill suited to the task. For some, it requires years of University study. For others, it requires apprenticeship and on the job training. Others require a skill base that can be learned and practised from a young age in the course of daily life, with no formal training.

A Linguistics Professor needs to **understand** his calling and vocation and be **trained** appropriately in order to **function** in his vocation. He is not expected to train or to perform as a Bricklayer or as a Diplomat. A Clerk is trained in his vocation and is not expected to function as a Personal Assistant. However, he **is** expected to function **well** as a Clerk, and if he were to prove unsatisfactory, would soon lose his job. A child is not expected to function with the maturity of an adult, and an adult would be perceived as immature if he functioned as a child.

Each vocation and calling is defined by a certain set of parameters. The individuals who function within **each** vocation or calling do so **within** those parameters, yet simultaneously inject their own insights, personality and intellect into their situation. Thus, there are no clones.

Why then, do we think that every other calling and vocation can have parameters set either by God or by man, and yet the very calling that is the crowning glory of representing the relationship of Christ and his Bride here on earth is somehow left to its own devices to define itself according to each couples' whims, likes, dislikes, biases, background, pains, preferences and culture.

God has spoken clearly enough on the subject for us to understand there is a 'role' for a wife and a 'role' for a husband. Once we accept that and begin to function within our God given role, our own insights, personality, talents, strengths and intellect can be released to enhance the role and to enrich the relationship.

Strangely though, most people enter the most important, most enduring, most intimate relationship of their lives with about as much understanding and vision as a surgeon who decides to rewire his home. The Surgeon may be very skilled in his vocation, but will not generally have the knowledge or skill required to safely do electrical installations for his home. The results could be disastrous.

The divorce statistics and the counselling rooms of today are about as equally filled with Christians as with non Christians. These facts bear witness to the disaster that is daily playing itself out around us. These facts bear witness to the consequences when men and women embrace the lies of the culture and deny the truth.

Are you squirming now?

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