

Destroying Pop-Christian Views of Marital Bliss - 2

Marriage Series

By Paul Washer

Bible Text: Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17

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Whenever one of the greatest burdens of anyone who preaches is when they look out over a congregation and they see so many... so many needs. You know there are so many needs because there are so many people and people are individuals and people have so many individual needs. It makes it very, very hard, very difficult. It is a great burden.

But then it is always to throw us back on the fact that it is a sovereign God who does sovereign work and that he does not need men or the help of men, but he does desire that men be obedient to what they have been called to do.

I plan to continue preaching today. I feel as though the Lord has led me that. As yesterday I began teaching a bit on marriage during the wedding and I would plan to continue doing that this morning. But before I do I would like to share two things.

One is not so much light hearted even though it may sound a bit light hearted. This morning I was thumbing through Scripture and looking back and forth at passages that the Lord was bringing to mind and I just happened to glimpse over in too far. I was in the New Testament and I moved the pages over too far and opened up to Jonah 4:7 and had a part of that passage underlined and it jumped out at me like just fire off the page. And it was simply these words.

Because I was looking around, "Lord what should I preach? What should I say? What should be done here this morning?" I still had very little peace about it and underlined was in Jonah 4:7 was, "But God appointed a worm."¹

And I know the immediate application of that text, the immediate context speaking about what happened there with Jonah, but it was almost like the Lord was sharing with me, "Paul, settle down. I have appointed a worm. You are that worm and that is ok. It is not about you. If I move today or do not move today it is not about you. It is about me. It is about the need of my people that I dearly love and I appoint worms to get glory for myself. I don't appoint great men. I appoint worms."

¹ Jonah 4:7.

The other thing that I would like to share today, that I just feel like I need to share is—and it is not so much prophecy, simply a reality—there are people here today that are just blind. There is no other way to say it but that they are blind and they walk in darkness. The only other possibility is that they are insane.

And what do I mean by that? A man is walking in the woods. He is enjoying the leaves and the trees, the sound of nature all around him, the smells of fresh air. He is walking nonchalantly, humming to himself, full of joy, taking in his surroundings. There is nothing wrong with that picture. Man is acting as a reasonable man doing something a sane man would do. But that is only because he does not realize at that moment he is being stalked by a 1200 pound grizzly. He is unaware of his true reality and so he casually meanders through the woods taking in sights and sounds.

Now let's say that there is those of us that are standing back from this man and can see the larger picture. Let's say that we are cut off from him so that he cannot hear our voice and yet we scream madly at the man, "Your life is in danger. You are being tracked by a bear. Sudden death is upon you and you do not know it."

Maybe from a far off distance he can see us waving our arms, running to him. He nonchalantly raises up and waves back.

That is a description of possibly many of you young people, possibly older people alike it is a description of you. And you will hear people. You will hear preachers. You will hear family members and they scream at you and they yell at you and they cry for you and they beat on the glass with their fists. And the only hope you have is that before it is too late the blindness is removed and you see the bear.

But, oh, my dear friend, this bear is so ferocious, this bear is so fast and so many have waited too long and when their eyes were opened it was still too late. Some of you are blind. Some of you are blind.

How is it that some men can recognize the validity of Christianity and it be a casual observer even though they recognize the validity of it? And how is it that some men see the same Christianity and literally it drives every heartbeat and every thought of their mind?

The difference has to be in this, not that one man is better than the other, but one man has seen what another has not seen. Some of you today are blind. And if that frightens you, what should you do? Cry out that your blindness be removed. Grope in the darkness. Grope with fear. Seek. There has never been a man, woman or child on the face of the earth that has genuinely sought the Lord that he has not been found by them. That is one of the most wonderful declarations. There has never been a person who truly wanted to be saved that the Lord did not save. There has never been anyone who has cried out to him sincerely that he has not answered with salvation.

Well, going from there I want us to go to Ephesians chapter five. Yesterday if you were at the wedding you heard a great deal to the man, a great deal to the man. But the reason why I spoke so much to the man is because it is about the man. We may glory somewhat in our authority in the household not knowing exactly what we are doing. To understand that you have authority in the household, gentlemen, is a correct thing, but a dangerous thing. To use authority is a dangerous thing because authority is given to use on behalf of the one who has appointed you—that would be God—and for the sake of the ones over whom you have been appointed. Authority is always to be used on behalf of those over whom you rule. And you will be held accountable.

Now when we look at verse 22 it begins by saying, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”²

Now when we come to this text we have two extremes in modern day America. The first extreme is to simply explain this away. One of the ways in which this is done is a doctrine referred to as mutual submission. And it is based on verse 21.

“And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”³

And there is a sense in which between the man and the woman there ought to be what is known as mutual submission because the great authority is God and his revelation of his written Word.

But it cannot be denied and it is wrong to deny that there is a sense within the married couple of the man taking authority and that being his place and the woman submitting to the authority of that man.

So there is a genuine case in the Bible for the authority of the husband. But now here is something else that I want you to see. The other extreme is where a husband takes this and uses this for his own benefits. A man who will do this, that will grab this text and use it to rule over his wife and his family for his own benefit is proving himself to be not simply a Legalist, but unconverted.

And when the command comes to women to submit to their husbands, here is something that you need to understand. It is talking about submitting within the general case of marriage, within the context of a normal marriage with its conflicts and with its problems, but within the context of the Church and the context of all the families in the Church and the context of what it means to have a normal family, you should be living in submission to your husband. This is not a command for a woman to say with a man who beats her to death. This is not a command for a woman to submit to an ungodly man making ungodly demands that cause her to live in disobedience to the Lord.

And so even though I don't have the seven days of lecture time necessary to explain all

² Ephesians 5:22.

³ Ephesians 5:21.

thee exceptions here, I just want you to see that when we speak about submission, the submission of a woman to her husband, we are talking about in the case of a normal marriage, of two people who are still open to sin and capable of sinning, of two people who make mistakes, of two people who are needy of grace, but at the same time two people who are walking with the Lord and seeking to obey him.

You see, whenever the idea of submission comes up we are always immediately trying to put forth all the exceptions.

Young people are really good at this. When I say, “Obey your parents,” they always come up to me and go, “Well, what if my dad asks me to build a nuclear bomb and blow up the Empire State building?”

You know, I always ask them, “Well, when was the last time your father asked you to do that?”

You see, your problem is not that. Your problem is when dad says, “Tell me about your friends, these people I don’t think you should be with,” or “Take out the trash.”

So in a normal context of a normal family, in a normal marriage with its positive and its negative, with its blessings and its problems, wife is to submit to the leadership of her husband.

Now, I want us to look at some things that are so extremely important. And in order to do that I want us to go for a moment to 1 Peter. And if you weren’t there yesterday at the wedding then I think you can get the tape or the CD to that and it may be helpful for you if you are a woman you definitely probably want to get it for your husband. If you are a man you probably want to hide it from your wife.

But in 1 Peter chapter three the Bible says, verse one, “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands.”⁴

Now what does it mean “in the same way”?

Well, he is talking about submission in the chapter preceding and he is talking about submission to government, submission to rulers and leaders. And what we need to understand is that God has set up a line of authority to govern humanity. He has set up a line of authority, not just within Christianity, but within the realm of human relations. He has set up authority.

Now it is great to be American. It is great to celebrate Independence Day. It is great to talk about our freedom. In a sense it is great that we have no king, that we the people govern ourselves.

⁴ 1 Peter 3:1.

But there is another case to be said for this that it really makes it hard for you to understand Christianity. We are a people who do not trust authority. We are a people who do not like authority.

Back in the early 70s and we... I remember seeing t-shirts all over, "Question Authority." And so we are a group of people. We do not want a king over us. We do not want a lord over us. We don't want anyone ruling over us. We are our own people. We do what we want and no one is going to tell me what to do. And because of that it makes it so difficult for us to understand Christianity. It makes it so difficult to do church in America.

For example, the church in America is all about a democracy. And because there is such a flippant gospel preached in most churches in America and since there is no church discipline practiced in America than the great majority of the people in a local church are carnal, wicked people and when they vote they control where the church goes.

You see, so one of the things that we have to understand is that we are a product of our culture. And sometimes we interpret the Bible, as one Scottish theologian said, through our flag and our checkbook. We need to be very careful.

The Bible speaks about authority.

Now some would say, "Well, that is great when you are the authority. But what happens when you are not?"

Well, it is not so great when you are the authority if you truly believe in God because God will hold all authority accountable on that great day and it will be a terrifying thing for all authority that has ruled apart or in contradiction to his authority.

Wives, you should fear for your husbands.

Let me ask you a question, wife. When was the last time you feared for your husband? You feared for the day that he has to stand before God? You see? Sometimes we do not take into consideration what the Scriptures are truly saying.

Now he is saying in the same way you wives, "Be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives."⁵

And the one thing that you need to see here is that when the Bible speaks about authority it speaks about it in a way that is so realistic. Because when the Bible speaks about the authority of government it is always presupposing that the government is not going to be in favor of Christianity, but actually against it. But it still commands the Christian to submit to authorities that aren't even walking according to God's Word.

And in that Christianity has a powerful testimony. And so when we come here to the idea

⁵ Ibid.

of submission in 1 Peter chapter three has doesn't say in an idealistic sort of way, "Wives, submit to your husbands because they are always going to do right and they are always going to have a sublime and pristine character and their works are always going to be good." That is not what he says.

He assumes that some husbands aren't even going to be saved. He assumes, right off the bat, that others aren't going to lead well. He assumes that even the best of the best, the top gun among all husbands that even he is going to make mistakes and have feet of clay. That is why a wife puts her hope ultimately in God and the God of her husband.

And that is a problem with a lot of teaching on authority. They do not recognize, because it is usually the men doing the teaching, that men are granted authority, but that authority will always have feet of clay. And one of the reasons that occurs is for the man to trust in God, but not only the man to trust in God, but for the wife to trust in the God of the man.

Now, it says this.

"Be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word..."⁶

Now how can they be disobedient to the Word? Well, there are so many ways, but let's break it down into two categories. One, primarily when this type of phrase is used, although not exactly in other places, it is primarily referring to a lost man. But at the same time let's use a general application. First of all let's talk about, for a second, a lost man and, secondly, let's talk about disobedient saved men. Because, believe it or not, wives, they do exist.

I have heard so... It is unbelievable, but I have heard so many times women saying that I don't have to submit to him. He is not a believer. And I have heard men say, "You know, I do not have to be a certain way or fulfill certain obligations towards my wife because she is an unbeliever."

And I have heard children who have been saved, gloriously in a family where the father or the mother and neither of them are Christians say, "I don't have to listen to my parents because they are not Christians." But that is not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches that we be at peace with all men and that we seek to submit to those in authority over us even if they are unbelievers. We do everything in our power to submit to them and only begin to think about not submitting when there are direct contradictions to the Word of God, that even to the unbelieving authorities in our lives we should do everything in our power to submit. And later on we are going to see the reason why. When we ourselves take matters into our own hands which means we no longer trust in the sovereignty of God and we begin to fight against the authorities over us because they have been unjust, then God pulls back and does not fight. But when we obey and seek to

⁶ Ibid.

live at peace and seek to submit and the authority over is disobedient then God intervenes.

And when he intervenes he intervenes.

Now I want us to look at something, women. It says, "If any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won."⁷

How many women seek to win their husbands? And not just to seek to win their lost husbands, but seek to win their saved husbands? How many women have I see striving and working to win lost husbands? So many. How many have I seen and heard from in counseling where they are praying and striving to make their husband more spiritual, the one that has been saved, but just seems to be lagging behind in zeal and spirituality?

So many. But most of those women go about it all wrong. They are leading their husbands to be leaders. And he can lead, but only in accordance with her will. She is leading him to be a leader and then can't understand why he doesn't lead.

When he does make a decision, but a decision that is obviously wrong because he is obviously not as spiritual as she is and it may be true, she corrects him on it and points him to the right way to lead.

Look what it says here.

"They may be won without a word."⁸

Why do you suppose he says that? I will tell you why, because God knows women better than women know women. And God knows that women have a power and it is in the tongue. And if it comes down to a verbal battle between a husband and a wife, you can just about always count on the fact that the woman is going to win. She is able to take that tongue and tear a man apart.

Now I want to say something here. I want to use an illustration. Please do not misinterpret this illustration. Do not leave here saying that Paul Washer said it is ok for men to beat their wives. But I just want to give you an illustration.

It is a terrible sin. You ought to be locked in jail if you ever touch your wife.

But I was counseling one time in Peru and there was this woman and it apparently that her husband had smacked her a few times, had beat her up a few times which is a horrible thing. We immediately told her she ought to separate from him. We ought to call the police. We ought to deal with the matter. But as I was talking immediately when she said that I took her side and began to do, you know, what needed to be done in counseling.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

The other pastor who was a Peruvian was sitting there and when I got through he said to the woman, "Let me ask you a question. Do you and your husband ever get into fights?"

And she goes, "Well, yeah, all the time."

"Does he ever say we need to go one way and you say we need to go the other?"

She goes, "Yes. He just doesn't even know what he is doing."

He goes, "When you get into those fights, those verbal arguments, who usually wins?"

She goes, "I do."

And he looked at her and he made me mad until he explained to me later what he was doing. He actually... I mean I got angry with what he said.

He looked at her and said, "If you would keep your mouth shut you would probably get hit a lot less."

And I looked at him at that like what is your problem? And he knew the woman a lot better than I.

Now we had to deal with the man. We had to do all sorts of things. We wanted her to get out of that. It was a terrible situation. But he said, "Paul, when a woman and a man get in a verbal disagreement, for the most part a woman can tear him to pieces, backs him against the wall and the only thing he has left if he is not a godly man is to start swinging." He said, "I have seen it so many times."

Now that is an extreme, terrible illustration. But the point that I want to make to you is this. The Bible teaches that you are going to get nowhere in resolving your problems, in bettering your husband, in improving your marriage through the words that come out of your mouth. And yet that is the thing you most often use. You are not going to win your husband by your words. You are just... I mean, you could go ahead and do it if you would like. You can do anything. Go ahead and try anything if you want. I am just telling you it is not going to work and I can prove it.

How many times has it worked? How many times has it worked?

I remember one time witnessing to someone and a friend of mine was there, a very wise young man was and I was witnessing. And when we left he said, "Well, Paul, you beat every one of his arguments, but you didn't win him." And he was right. The guy considered him something of atheistic apologist or something and everything he put forth I demolished. That is all I did. I won the argument. I didn't win the man.

The Bible specifically, I think, points out the idea of not being able to win your husband

with the Word because that is the very thing that women are most prone to go to, their word, their arguments, their reasons why. And it is like a catch 22. It is like a vicious cycle that when you get into it you can't get out of it and it begins to deteriorate the marriage in what way?

Husband seeks to leave. He says something. The wife says the opposite, contradicts him. And then it begins to happen so often that when the husband begins to lead any time and if the wife opens her mouth any time he won't even listen even when she is right anymore because the only thing she ever does is tells him what to do. And so there is a need for wisdom.

Now, wives, let me tell you something. You are not to give your husband, as I preached on yesterday, a husband is not to give his wife what she deserves. At the same time, wife, you are not supposed to give your husband what he deserves. You are supposed to do what is ever necessary to make him a better man. And that is sometimes allowing him to lead when you think he is wrong.

The term for man or woman is an extremely dangerous thing. And how are we to win in any relationship, but specifically here, how is a wife supposed to win her husband? It says here, "won without a word by the behavior of their wives."⁹

This applies in a greater context, not just to family, not just to marriage, but we would even say that among unbelievers, wouldn't we? So many times we are trying to win people by our words and not by our behavior.

I used to sit down on a plane. I would sit down on a plane it was my job to witness to the person sitting beside me whether they wanted it or not. And so I would sit down and if they were closed to everything I was saying I would just and then walk off the plane feeling justified.

Well, he knows where he is going. And then it dawned on me, the whole thing about you are to be a servant. And to get on a plane and literally, you know, I will get on a plane now. I will sit down. I will talk to someone, look for an open door. If none comes I might even just go ahead and say, "Look, I am a Christian and would you mind if maybe I shared with you about the Christian faith for a few minutes?"

If someone says, "Yes," glory to God.

I had a guy sit down with me. He used to be George Bush, senior's... one of his advisors. I sat down with him on a plane coming back from Europe one time and I said, "Could I share with you about the Christian faith?"

And he said, "Well, I am Dutch Reformed and I don't really know anything about Christianity, but could you do me a favor? We have got six hours here, could you just go through the whole course of the thing?"

⁹ Ibid.

I said, "Well, I am glad you asked."

But I sit down beside someone and began to share with him about Christ and they automatically seal up. Do you know what I do? I stop and I carry on the conversation directed towards what they want to talk about so that maybe through my kindness and consideration and my questions about their life and allowing them to tell me what they want to tell me, maybe they will have like heaping hot coals poured on their head and be ashamed instead of walking off the plane telling their friends in the bar there in the airport, "I was accosted by one of those fanatical Christians."

You see, it is always by our behavior. It is astounding how little Jesus said. It is astounding that he wrote nothing. His life and especially today when there are so many talkers in the evangelical community, so many preachers, so many screaming, so many doing so many things and someone is just going, "I just want to see somebody live this. I just want to see them live it out."

And it is saying the same thing here. It is saying to win your husband without a word by the behavior of their wives. And what kind of behavior is that? A hearty Legalism, a super spirituality? What is it? A condescending look? No. It is through this, your chaste and respectful behavior. It means behavior with respect. Not what you are doing is what you are doing is what you are doing what God commanded you to do.

Wives, you need to understand something. There is a reason why in Ephesians five it never commands the wife to love her husband even though other places, yes, it says to love your husband. But in Ephesians five not it never tells the wife to love her husband because that romantic emotional love is not what your husband needs primarily. Notice what it says. Respect or even fear your husband.

The idea there is to respect your husband, to treat him with honor. You see, a wife needs to know she is loved. She needs to see it. She needs to hear it. She needs so many things. She needs love. It needs to be expressed. A man, by and large, although he needs love, it is not to the same degree. He needs something else. He needs respect. If a man does not believe his wife respects him he is totally incapacitated. But if he knows his wife respects him, he can fight the world.

I have had women tell me that my husband makes me feel ugly. You know, I know that there is all these beautiful super models running around on television and all over, you know, they are six feet tall, weight three pounds, that type of thing. And here I am. You know, my husband, I just don't feel pretty.

Well, that is a travesty, but let me tell you something, wife.

As so many men tell me my wife makes me feel small.

You see, it is both things. My wife makes me feel small, empty and powerless, puny, a boy.

And usually you take that and go talk to the wife and say, “You know, your husband feels this...”

“Well, if he would stop acting like a boy I would stop treating him like one.”

And the husband says, “Well, if she would dress nicer and lose some weight and this and that I would see her as pretty.”

Do you see what we are getting at? It all goes back to this, conditions, doesn't it? Justifying your sin because of the bad behavior of another person will count nothing on the day of judgment because you are not rebelling against a disobedient mate. You are rebelling against the Lord of glory who never gave you one excuse to do so except this one, the woman you gave me.

And that goes back to realizing that God gave you the specific person he wants you to have and he didn't do it so that you could write a book on marital bliss. He did it so that you would be like Jesus which you all want to be and the only reason you want to be that way is because you don't know what it means. Because what it means is this. To love, too, is this. What is unconditional love? Love someone who doesn't meet any other conditions.

I don't know what we get in our head when we are in college and we get saved and we start praying, “Lord, make me like Jesus.” Is it because we all want to walk on water? Or raise the dead? We don't have a clue what we are talking about. It means, “Lord, strip me of every reason to love every human being around me and then empower me to love them anyways.”

I have always said the most dangerous thing you could ever pray is, “Lord, make me like Jesus.”

As a matter of fact there ought to be a rule that someone can't pray that prayer until they are a Christian for at least 10 years because they don't have a clue what they are asking for.

John Newton explains this and I heard a dear man preach on it a few months ago in Zambia and it just... how John Newton prayed. There came a time in his life when he prayed to be made like Jesus and such horrendous, horrible things happened to him. And he wrote it in a song that he had thought that, well, he thought when he prayed that that where would just be this sudden ushering in to greater holiness, that God would do something by his Spirit and just in one second empower him to be someone else and he did not know that it would cause tremendous suffering in everything in his life for that prayer to be answered.

So it says, “observe your chaste and respectful behavior.”¹⁰

Now he goes on in verse three and he says your adornment must not be—and in the New American Standard it has—your adornment must not be merely external. I just want you to know something. The word “merely” is not there in the text. And I am not sure that it ought to be in this translation.

We are so careful not to be Legalists, you know, well, it doesn't mean that you can't have any kind of adornment or external thing, you know. It doesn't mean that you can't have anything like that. But it does mean that shouldn't be the big thing they see when they look at you.

Now there is a problem with this text. One, we live in a culture that is all about externals. And so we are always trying to protect our right to put on external things to make us more beautiful and some of us need a lot more external things than others. So that is one side.

But here is the other side. Now this is probably going to get me stoned, so some of you stronger men, get a door open. Gestapo home schooling moms. Now my wife and I are going to home school. And we really want to do that. But I want to tell you something. There is no difference between me standing in a church somewhere and watching some lady walk through the door with every kind of braid in her hair. I mean, she looks like a circus. I mean things she has got hanging from her ears, I could use them as fishing lures. But there is no difference between that and also, look at the other side of this. Don't get angry with me. But I can go to Walmart and... there goes a home schooler. There goes this. There goes that. Because I want you to know that all of us can put on a pattern of clothing that turn out to be nothing more than pride. It can go both ways.

Now in our culture primarily it goes to the fishing lure lady. But on the other side there is this thing. I mean, you can just... you see them coming and you are afraid of them. You just know they are going to... and when you talk to them you know that they are looking at you like this. And it scares you to death. And so what I am saying is be careful on both sides, because it is not about external whether it is the flamboyant braiding of hair or purposely making yourself you look like you just walked through a car wash. Both things are wrong.

Do you see what I am... Some... don't hate me because I am telling you the truth. It works both ways. It really does and you have to be careful. And, no, I can't give you a specific answer because if I do I have to draw you a picture and then it, the whole thing starts all over again, the Paul Washer way of dressing if you are going to be spiritual.

Some it just comes down to this. Some people need to loosen up and other people need to tighten up. And you just have to be careful. You just have to be careful. I remember

¹⁰ 1 Peter 3:2.

one time I... people in Romania, a few times I went there and preached and God really moved and people thought that, man, I was a man of God.

And then I made the biggest mistake of my life. I took my wife over there. I took my wife over there and I had people walk up to me and say... this happened twice. "Brother Paul, really, you know, I just love you preaching and you preach with the power of God, but how could you be married to woman like this?"

Because her hair. It was this long. Now she is even more heretical. It is like this long now. But her hair was like this long and you know you are not supposed to cut your hair and she had make up on, not a lot.

Someone asked me one time, [?] tend to make up? For some women it is a sin not to wear make up. A little paint on an old barn never hurt anything.

You know, but this girl kept coming and [?] has always been very wise in these things. And she sat down with this girl who literally was... and [?] said, "You are a beautiful girl. Let me ask you a question. Do you have any joy in your life? Do you have any joy? Because I haven't heard you say anything about our Savior." And she just went down through a list of things.

And then she... the girl showed [?] and me a picture of herself prior to her revelation of how she was supposed to look to be spiritual. And she looked so happy. [?] said, "Look at this picture. You look so happy. Look at you now."

Legalism.

And let me just share with you something, ladies. On one side there is this extravagant, flamboyant woman who is living in luxury who is sensual and God hates all of that. On the other side there is a Legalism that can also kill. And it is so hard to live the Christian life for this reason.

And you say, "Well, why didn't God just clear all this up?"

Because then we would have followed everything, dotted every I, crossed every T and become nothing but hell bound Pharisees.

And so at one point we have to be careful in our culture when it says, "not merely external," because it seems like we are trying to protect our right to have some external things going on. But at the same time to put "merely external" in there is good because we also have a tendency to try to dress up like Puritans. And so we just simply have to be careful.

And I want to tell you something and it just... I don't now how... I don't know the rules. I don't know really how it works, but I can tell you this. You take one look at some women and the moment you look at them you know they are sensual. You take some...

one look at some women and you think, I hope they don't ask me any questions about God because I know I am going to be wrong. And you take at some women and you forget about clothing and hair and everything because you just notice Jesus. And I don't know where that works, but it is there. You just can't fake it.

So don't try to take certain things as badges of spirituality. The evidence of spirituality is spirituality. It defines itself. And so some people need to hear, "Hey, you need to dress more modestly." Some people maybe need to hear the opposite. Some people just need to be left alone.

And so it says, how do we win our husbands? Some women will get saved and get serious about it and become serious about it in almost everything, but there is just... well, it is like this story one time I heard it was a replay of what might have happened in the first century and it talks about this drunk who was known by everybody in the neighborhood. He was very friendly. He played with children. He was always carving out little animals for them. He would go down the road with a kind of a dance in his step and a song in his heart. He was just an old drunk and one day he got saved.

He no longer played with children. He no longer sang. He no longer walked with a dance in his step. He was mean. He was critical. And he walked up to some of his old friends who were drinking around a barrel that they had put some wood inside, had fire in it. He tried to witness to them and they said, "Oh, no, we liked you a lot more when you were a drunk."

I have met people like that in Christianity. Christianity is not about being prudish. It is not about being closed and mean and critical. It is about this internal nature and it is in verse four.

"But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit,"¹¹ not a right demanding critical spirit. But just a gentle and quiet spirit.

Never forget. The kingdom of God and the advancement of the kingdom of God is never achieved through inquisitions and wars and prodding and manipulation and this glance of disappointment at your mate. But it is like taking a seed, a watermelon seed. So if you are eating watermelon, you throw open the window. I am from Alabama, now, I can do this. You throw up the window and spit the seed out. And you forget all about it. And then on day you walk out there and there is a watermelon plant and there is watermelons on it and you don't even know how it got there. That is how the kingdom advances. You are not commanded to change your husband. You are commanded to live before him with a gentle and a quiet spirit.

Just like men, you are not commanded to make your wives submit to you. You can't do it anyways, nor can you, woman, change your husband. But you have been commanded to live before him in such a way that when he is disobedient he will immediately recognize it.

¹¹ 1 Peter 3:4.

Here is a point that I always use. It is very important. I have always loved castles and though they were amazing things and in Romania got to see a few, even some forms of castle in South America.

And there is something that is quite amazing, women, that I want you to see. The door of the first floor to that castle is humongous. I have always wanted to use that word in a sermon. It is just they are big. They are really big and probably 30 men wide could go through that door or 20 or 15. But if you go a lot of times through the second floor of the castle that the stairway to get up there is about this wide. And the door at the top of the stairwell is only about like this. It just doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

And when they ask the guy, "What is the problem here? Why did they do this?"

He said, "Well, it is very simple." He said, "Let's say you are... the castle is in a siege, the enemy is seizing the castle. And it is obvious that they are about to break down the door. The enemy is going to break down this big front door and they are going to rush in.

Everybody in the castle runs to the second floor.

Now let's say that there is only 35 people in the castle and there is 350 really mean guys out there knocking the door down. But when those 35 run up to the second floor everything changes, why? The enemy can only run up that stairwell one at a time. And so one guy with a lance can stand there in the door and defend the entire castle from 350 guys because only one at a time can get up there.

That is the way you are a lot of times, wife. The husband, you have already knocked down his front door. He is scared to death. He has run to the second floor. You have run up that stairwell in hot pursuit because you are going to change him. You are going to correct him. You are going to make him the man he ought to be and he is just holding you off. And you are sitting there fighting and fighting and fighting. And the whole time you are fighting, God, why don't you do something? God, why don't you help me? Why don't you change him?

And God is going, "Get out of the way. Get out of the way, because only one can stand in this stairwell at a time. So as long as you keep fighting I will keep standing behind you going, 'Get out of the way.' And if you will get out of the way I will fight."

Did you ever hear in Romans, "Give place to the wrath of God. Don't avenge yourself"?

And, husband, let me tell you something. Did you ever see your wife back down that stairwell and let God take the place, you better surrender. You better surrender. The most dangerous thing a man can have is a submissive wife with a gentle and quiet spirit. And, wife, this has nothing to do with your husband. He could be as bad as all that you say he is, but as long as you are fighting against him, you, too, are going to receive God's discipline and maybe God's discipline might be the lack of intervention to change your

husband because you won't obey God which is back down the stairwell and give God room.

Now here is something else that I want you to say. Many women think their husbands are incompetent. And so they want to train their husband to be the man he ought to be.

Woman, that is like me training a ballerina to be the ballerina she ought to be. I am not a ballerina. I don't know if you have looked, but I am not really built for that. You are going to train this man to be the man he ought to be? You are not a man. You are not wired as a man. You weren't called to be a man. You are not a man. You can't train him to be a man. Let him go and let God train him.

"Well, I just don't trust that he is going to..."

No, let me put it this way. The same way that Adam said, "The woman that you gave me..." He wasn't blaming Eve. He was blaming God.

In the same way when you say, "Well, I don't trust that he will change," what you are saying is I do not trust that God will change him. Either he cannot because he has no power or he will not because he is not covenant keeping.

Now, let me say something else. Verse four.

"But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."¹²

Now let me ask. I was preaching one day and everyone got really, really mad and I came down from the pulpit and this guy walks up to me and he goes, you know, how these young guys talk.

"Man, Mr. Washer, you rock."

I more roll, don't I?

He goes, "No, man, you rock."

And I go, "Ok, how do I rock?"

He goes, "You are not scared of anybody."

And I go, "Well, I am probably the most fearful man in this room. I am probably more afraid of men and more insecure than anyone else in this room."

He said, "That can't be, because you just made everybody in this room really mad."

¹² 1 Peter 3:4.

Is aid, "Yeah." But I said, "It is all relative."

And he said, "Well, what do you mean?"

I said, "Let's say for a moment that what I am telling you is true, that I am more afraid of men than anyone else in this room. But men aren't the only one in this room. There is someone else in this room and it is God. Now if I have got to make a choice, young man, regarding whom I am going to be afraid of, I am going to choose God. So I am afraid of men, but I am more afraid of God and so that is what causes these types of things to happen. Now would you please leave because I want to get to my car as fast as I can?"

Now, what does it matter to you? Look at this. If you have this hidden person quality, this imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, what do you care whether or not your husband recognizes it or not? Now, of course, he ought to and, of course, it will be a blessing if he does, but look at what this says. It doesn't say that if you have that it will be precious in the sight of your husband. But he says it definitely is precious in the sight of God.

One of the things that we have got to come back to is most of us, all of us get into Christianity for us. I know there is a lot of talk about everything we do for the glory of God, but that is basically not a reality and we prove it every day. Most of us get saved for us. Most of us obey for us. And most of us do things because of what it will return for us. And one of the things that we have got to realize is that this is a spirit that is totally and completely wrong. We do it not because we reap some temporal benefit. We do it because it is precious to God. It is precious to him. So whether or not my children respond to my godliness or whether or not my wife responds or my husband responds or my friends respond, I should have this characteristic and this quality because I know that God is shining down upon me. His countenance is for me. He is pleased with me. That is the thing we should be looking for.

And if we have that one thing we don't need anything else. It is precious to God. I have his joy and his pleasure because I am doing this. I don't do it... You know, most wives as well as most husbands will try this during the first hours of the morning. And why does it not endure all day? Because no one responds appropriately to what I am doing therefore I am going to withdraw my favors.

That right there tells you why you are doing everything.

You see, here is the one thing you have got to realize, wife and husband, and it is this. You can always use the other party for an excuse, as an excuse for your sin. Always. That is never going to end. It is never going to end. You can always use the other party as an excuse of why you sin. But the problem is you can't use God that way because he has never given you an excuse. He has always been good. He has always been right. He has never failed.

So when you fail him, you do not fail him with excuse. You fail him as a selfish rebel.

One of the best books on being a husband that I think has ever been written—and I have read quite a few because I have needed to—is an exemplary husband. I recommend that book. Why? Because the book is primarily not about being a husband. It is primarily about your greatest problem which is you are not Christ like.

And, you see, that is the thing. Are you living as a person who seeks to be precious in the sight of God?

Now I want to turn just quickly to one last thing. Turn back for a second to Hebrews 13 verse 17.

“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”¹³

Look. He really does have to lead which means he really does have to make decisions. And you can't just let him lead. Listen to that language. You can't just let him lead when you are in agreement. And you should not every time he says something even if every time he says something he is wrong or a little bit wrong, don't correct him and contradict him every time because eventually you are just doing damage to yourself because he is going to get to the point where every time you begin to open your mouth he has already built a wall because he knows you are going to come at him.

Sometimes just let him lead and then when he falls flat on his face don't stand there and go, “Told you so.” Let it be a joy to him that here is two things that I want you to see.

First of all, do this with joy. Let him lead with joy.

Used to my managerial style at the mission was basically this. The floggings will continue until morale improves. And I am a perfectionist. And then I started trying... I mean God began to do a work and over time it has been, look at the gifts of this person. Let them go. Let them go. Let them just do. Let them make the decisions. And it is amazing how many decisions people have made that I haven't agreed with and in the end they turned out to be better than the decision I would have made. And times when they have made decisions and it has been wrong and it has hurt us.

But here is the thing. When you are the boss and you have authority in a business usually, you know, authority... let me give you an example. In the military they teach authority and you do not question. Why? Because if someone with authority turns around and looks at you and says, “Fall,” if you go, “Why?” your head is blown off.

Just like when I used to be in the oil and gas thing out there in the University of Texas. I wanted to be an oil and gas lawyer so we would have to go out on these places where they were drilling for oil and gas. And they said the number one rule, always watch the

¹³ Hebrews 12:17.

oldest guy on the rig. If he jumps, jump. It is just it. I don't care if the platform is 30 feet. He does Peter Pan right off that platform. You go right behind him.

There is a story of a missionary in Africa whose boy is playing under a tree and the father comes out of the house and stands on the porch kind of watching his son and all of the sudden he screams like a mad man at his son, "Fall!"

And his son fell. And he said, "Crawl towards me." And the son just crawled.

He said, "Get up and run." He got up and he ran straight to his father.

A pit viper had come behind the boy's head and if the boy had said, "Why?" or "I don't want to," he would be dead. So obedience can be a good thing.

Another thing that I want you to see in a business when a man has authority, he doesn't have time. Yes, sometimes he is going to make bad decisions, but not all the time he has time to call everybody in and get everybody's opinion. Sometimes the man just has to sit there and go, "Let's do this. We have got to do it and we have got to do it now and we are going to do it. It is my call. I am going to make it. We have got to go."

Sometimes that has to happen. And if he has got someone in the group that every time he makes a decision they walk into his office with the contrary or they are just... every time. Eventually it runs everything apart. It ruins everything.

Now the husband is supposed to talk to his wife. They should meet together. They should pray together. If the wife thinks there is a problem a red flag should go up in his mind, but at the same time don't use all this against your husband, wife, when he has to make a decision. Let him lead.

The great complaint that women have today is that if a man eating lion got loose in America he would starve to death because there aren't any men. But part of the problem there is this. You want a man, if he is in a movie, when he walks in to the family to lead maybe you want a boy again.

You say, "Let him lead with joy."

Now I know the way some women are.

You are going to say, "All right. I heard that message today, ok?"

And you get home and you talk to your husband, "I heard that message. I am going to let you lead with joy, but I am watching you. I have got my eye on you, boy."

No. That is, again, you are god, aren't you? God can't control your husband, can't control your family. Be careful. Just be careful.

Yesterday, again, I spoke the whole time about men and their responsibility. So please get that CD because I laid it on pretty hard, much harder than I did today on the women. But this is important. This is very, very important.

Let's pray.

Father, I only preach these truths today, Lord, because they warm my heart and because they have been a great help to me. They have been a great help to me. Lord, please help us to take Scripture and not master it, but that it might master us. Oh, God, make your people that thing which would bring you most glory in Jesus' name. Amen.