

The Christian Wife: A Call to Submission

Colossians 3:18

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Colossians 3:18-25, the Word of God reads, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality." Let us pray.

Lord, we come before You, asking now that You would help us to receive the Word of God and to do it. Give us ears to hear what the Spirit says unto the churches and help us, Lord God, now we ask, to show and declare our love to You by worshiping You as we submit ourselves to Your Word, in Jesus' name, Amen.

We've been having our series on the family, and we had two introductory sermons. One was to establish the institution of the family, which was God's institution, and then we also dealt with last week some of the threats that were aimed toward the family. Now, this week, we actually get into our text, which I'm so glad to finally arrive at, which deals with the things that we need to know about our responsibilities to one another in the family.

Now, there are five positive commands in these verses that are directed towards each member, all the members of the household, that are there to help us understand what it is that God expects from us in relationship to how we are to live in our houses, in our families. Now, I'm hoping by this stage, we have understood correctly God's design laid out in Genesis and not only that but also seen the detrimental effects in our society and in families that reject God's design. And that's been really the purpose of the last two sermons, so that we might come to the point right now, today, and from this day forward, as we look at these texts of Scripture with a prayer, "Lord, maker of and creator of the family, what will You have us to do?"

Here, we see that God has designed it, we see that man has corrupted it, and the effects of it have been detrimental. That should drive every believing soul to the point where they are crying out, "Lord, what do You want me to do right now? How then should I behave in light of You being the author of the family and the world having corrupted it?"

And the first response that God gives us is directed to the wife in verse 18, and the reply comes, as it were, from heaven, saying, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." Now, it is important as we go on here to realize that this section is not segregated from the rest of the epistle. Some people have suggested that, and that Paul's breaking out into some kind of moral code that was existing in the time amongst even the pagan traditions or Aristotle and things like that. But what is important to realize is that this is very much intimately connected with the entire epistle.

And the way it's connected to the entire epistle is that this entire epistle is teaching us that the Jesus who died and has saved us is the Jesus who has risen from the dead. He is the one who has created all things that were created by Him and for Him, and He is the head of all things. He's the head of the church, and He is the one to whom we are to submit ourselves. So the whole epistle really has this view of the lordship of Jesus Christ, and this passage is full of the word "Lord."

Look at verse 18, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord." Look at verse 20, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord." Look at verse 23, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." And verse 24, "Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ." And then the final verse says that this Lord is one day going to repay each person for what they do, and there's no partiality with God.

This is very intimately connected with the lordship of Jesus Christ, and what the epistle is taking us to here is that Jesus is not only Lord of creation, but He is Lord of the home, and He is to be Lord in our homes. So as we come to this series, one question must consistently beg: Is Jesus really Lord of my life? And if so, well, His Word, even in relationship to the most private areas of our living, He must speak into that. He must rule even in those spheres. And so the first commandment that we have here is directed to the wives in verse number 18, and it says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." And I want to begin by just outlining what submission is and also what it is not. I think it's helpful to get the balance, as there is obviously a pendulum swing in many of these areas. And so let's consider what the meaning of submission is.

Well, the meaning to submit or to submit basically means to place or arrange under. Some have suggested that it's a military term that refers to the idea of ordering and things being in rank. And once again, that shows us that it's not necessarily referring to a difference in essence or that the man is better than the woman and the woman better than the man, but rather function and order. We are humans, we are designed in the image of God, but just as there are in any institution, government, the church, there's also in the home, there ought to be rank and order in order for there to be proper function, even in the army, for example. That's not to suggest that we have to run our homes like a military, just to make that clear, but that's where the word comes from. But the context is not military.

Okay, so we move on from here, understanding that there is an arrangement that is important, and the word brings that out. It really means to be under the influence of another in such a way that it results in obedience. So you are being influenced by another to the extent that it results in obedience. Now the verb here is in the middle voice, and I don't want to bog you down with this, but some commentators have suggested that it implies a voluntary submission on the part of the wife. Now the middle voice is usually translated as "wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband," which the King James brings out: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." An implication would be that it is on the part of the wife, or the duty of the wife, to voluntarily submit herself. It is not that the husband is to demand it necessarily, neither is it to be forced upon her, but rather it is to be a voluntary submission. I think that is true also from the idea that it is God that commands it, not the husband that commands it, and that's what we need to also understand: that these demands are not coming from parents to children necessarily, or from husbands to wives, or from wives to husbands; this is coming from God to the family, and so we're receiving His Word as the authoritative Word of God. So there's a voluntary yielding in the idea of submission.

Now Wayne Grudem points out three things that help define submission, or what should I say, true submission is. True submission, firstly, affirms. It affirms the leadership of the husband, so it's an affirming of the husband's authority, of the husband's leadership. Secondly, it acknowledges, but it acknowledges that the authority is not mutual. And I think this is really important, that the authority is not mutual. Although a husband is to hear his wife and take into consideration the things that she says, which should even inform his decision-making, the issue still is that there is not an equal authority. She submits to him, and he does not submit to her equally. In the order God has made, the husband is the head, and the wife is to submit to the head, as the church does to Christ, as we will look at later. So, there is not necessarily a mutual submission. That is not to

say that he will not receive and take into consideration and follow through with the things that his wife says. We must never forget that God revealed many things to ladies, even in the Old Testament, like Sarah, where He said, "Cast out the bondwoman," and God said to Abraham, "Listen to the voice of your wife." So, it is essential to realize that this is not a matter of "don't speak and say nothing," but ultimately, Abraham was responsible and the final authority in the home for the decisions that were made.

Submission involves actual obedience, and that is important to know. It is not just a matter of attitude, which is a significant part of it, but it is an attitude that must lead to obedience. You cannot think you are submitting if there is no obedience following through with that. It is a false concept that you may be convincing yourself of something that is not true. The Bible teaches us in Colossians 3:18 that wives are to submit to their own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. The idea of "fitting in the Lord" helps us understand and realize that there is a sense of obligation here. It is unfitting for those who are in the Lord to be not submissive to their husbands. It is unbecoming for wives to be unsubmissive. It does not fit with the will of God, and it is not becoming of God's will for the wife to be unsubmissive. That means it is fitting to be engaged in a life of submission in the place where God has placed you in the family. We have to realize that there is a sense of obligation, which means God is not pleased when there is a lack of submission in the home.

Obedience and submission are intrinsic; you cannot be submissive without obedience. However, it is also true that obedience does not necessarily imply submission or mean submission. You can be doing things in an unsubmissive spirit. The body may be engaged in the action, but the heart is disconnected. There is a lack of submission of the will and of the heart. There is a disconnect, and it is essential to realize that it does not necessarily imply that there is submission because there is obedience. The submission that God requires is far more than just participating in the action; He wants the heart to be engaged also.

It is important to understand certain prerequisites that promote submission in your life. For many women, there is this idea that we come to a text like Colossians 3:18, "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands," and it is like, "I just got to submit, I just got to submit." But they are not understanding that there are many things that will drive healthy submission in their lives. Many attitudes in the Word of God are bound in the concept of submission. To have true submission, you must also have these attitudes. Sometimes, it is not a matter of insisting on submission, but rather, we need to help prepare the hearts with certain attitudes that will make it more willing to submit. I will point out a few attitudes of the heart that are connected and related to submission. If you're a husband here today,

or even single, listen: these truths apply to you also in your relationship to the Lord. We're going to look at that even later, so you can apply these things to yourself.

The first thing that is so important, and almost impossible to have submission apart from, is the idea of respect and reverence. In Ephesians 5:33, it says, "And let the wife see that she reverence or respects the husband." Now, it's very difficult and very hard to submit to someone you don't respect. If in your mind, your husband is dumb, uncaring, lazy, doesn't know anything, and never gets anything right, then it's usually followed up in your own mind with, "How am I meant to submit to this guy?" Right? Indication: there's this disrespect that precedes this rebellion, if I could say, or this heart that is not yielded in submission.

But what the Bible points out to us in Ephesians chapter 5, maybe we can turn there together just briefly. Ephesians chapter 5, just a few pages back in your Bibles, and in verse 22, we are told the reason for a wife's submission. It says here, "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." And then it says in verse 23, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body." Now, it says here the reason for your submission is not the perfect performance of your husband. It is the very fact that the husband is the head of the wife. In other words, God has made your husband something in your home that you need to respect, even though he himself may not be worthy of the respect by his behavior and his conduct. There is a sense in which God has positioned him there for the respect.

So, it's important to recognize that. How can I submit to him? Well, ultimately, he is your head, and therefore, God made him the head; therefore, you must respect him for what God has made him, not necessarily because of his certain performances. You see, in Ephesians 5:22, it says you are to do this "as to the Lord," because the Lord has made the husband the head of the wife. So, it's very important to first and foremost recognize that it's going to be very impossible to submit to a husband you disrespect. So, if you cultivate a respect for God's order, you will find that you will be more inclined towards submission.

But secondly, another quality and characteristic is humility, which is essential for submission. The Bible speaks of Jesus's obedience to the will of the Father in Philippians 2 as being preceded by a humiliation. It says here that He "made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." So, we see that preceding His obedience and submission to the will of the Father was an attitude of humiliation: to come down

from heaven's glory, to walk among men, and to take upon Himself, in the incarnation, the flesh, as it were, the body of man, and to go to the cross in accordance with God's will.

So, we see this connection between humility and obedience. The will of God must be preceded by a humility of heart. Now, it's impossible to submit yourself to your husband if your heart is full of pride. If you think more highly of yourself than you ought, it'll be very difficult to yield yourself to your husband. We say things, maybe you might say things like, "I get everything right, he gets everything wrong. I do everything in this household, therefore I deserve to be heard." But what is meant by "heard" sometimes is "obeyed." "I'm not getting my way," right? And so, it's very good to be careful of that statement. But the idea is this: "I've done this, I've done that, I do this, I look at me, I'm doing this, why am I not getting what I deserve?" But it's not about that, is it? Humility receives God's given roles; it doesn't try to supersede the role and think that I deserve a role that God hasn't distributed to me because I am performing in a certain way. That's a self-righteous pride that often creeps into the hearts of many women in the Lord.

And so, 1 Peter 5:5 deals with this, and it says, "Be submissive one to another and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." This is not about rights; this is not about what we deserve because, at the end of the day, we all deserve the judgment and wrath of an Almighty God. And this ultimately is a matter of submission to the will of God, and we're going to look at that in just a moment.

So, secondly, we say it's important to cultivate humility of heart. "Let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus." But thirdly, we are to see also that there must be a willingness and a readiness. True submission contains within it a readiness and a willingness. You know, it was prophesied of the Lord Jesus in Psalms 40; it says, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." This Messianic Psalm has Jesus saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." And He delighted in the will of the Father, meaning there was a willingness, there was a readiness, there was a delight in the things that God had prepared for Him.

And also, we see that in James 3, where the wisdom from above is not only pure and peaceable, but it's also willing to yield or easy to be entreated or willing to yield. And true submission has within it this concept of being willing to yield. This is true wisdom that comes from above, the wisdom of God. And so, it's important to realize that there must be a desire and a willingness to obey the Word of God, to submit to the Word of God if ever there's going to be true submission in your life.

True submission should flow from that readiness of heart. And I really believe that a lot of the inconsistencies and the delays in submission between a relationship in a husband and wife lie really at this point: that before even the husband expects anything, there should be a willingness and a readiness to do the will of God, which in this passage is very clear, is being submissive to your own husband.

And so, if you cultivate a willingness, it will help you. But you might ask yourself, "How do I get this willingness? I mean, maybe after a sermon like this, I'll be very willing, but a week from now, I don't see how I'm going to be willing." Well, the reason why you may be very willing after a sermon like this is because, after a sermon like this, you may start to begin to see the value of submission. And if we want to get a willingness and get a readiness, our eyes must be open to see the value of submission, that the meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, of great value.

You must see the wisdom of God's Word and the wisdom of His ways. You must be persuaded by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God that there's no other path for me to take that will bring success in my life and in my marriage but the path of God that He has laid out for me in His Word. You see, if you see that your submission will promote happiness in your own heart and happiness in your own home, you will find yourself much more willing to yield submission to your husband because you will see the value in it. It is an encouragement to see the blessings and fruit of the wisdom of God in His Word.

And finally, as to some of these things that we should seek to get in order to have true submission, is meekness. I think this is probably one of the most important truths connected to submission. Meekness is the quietness and gentleness of spirit that does not resist the providence of God but receives them rather as from His hand and as good. The word "to be meek" is the idea of a horse being reined in, and when the horse is broken in, the passions of the horse are ruled, the emotions of the horse are ruled, and it is governed by the order of the master. In this sense, meekness realizes that God is in control, He is sovereign, and what He brings into my life is good for me.

I think of Job who said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There is a great display of meekness in that statement. He gives, He takes, He's in control. Whatever my lot may be, I will glory in my Redeemer, I will glory in God. This is the meekness of spirit that needs to be cultivated in our hearts.

It's important to realize that God's providences, He is in control, and we

have to have a deep conviction of that, especially as a wife. Because being under submission to somebody else can be very difficult. In 1 Peter 3, Peter explains this difficulty, and I want you to see it with me. Go to 1 Peter 3, we will look at a few scriptures together, but this is a very important scripture.

1 Peter 3:3-6 says, "Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

Now, I want you to see from this passage that here we see this gentle, meek, and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God. But he uses this illustration of the former women of old, these holy women who trusted in God, they believed in God, they rested in God, they trusted in this God, and what did that lead to? It led to submission, submission of life, obedience in what they did. But then he says this in verse 6, "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

Why mention that? Why mention fear? Why mention terror in relation to submission? Well, the connection is quite obvious, and it is this: when we allow ourselves to be gripped with fear and terror about what the future may hold, it is very easy for us then to take control and not want to submit to the authority that is maybe leading us in a certain direction that we are afraid of.

Allow me to illustrate: a husband might say, "Honey, I really feel that it's the right thing for us to move to a different city or state," some big decision like that. We all know this is a very fearful prospect, not just for wives but even for husbands and for children. But at that point in time, those fears are genuine and they're okay to have. But if we give way to them and we allow ourselves to be in terror of the possible outcomes of where we're going to live, where we're going to go, what's going to be on tomorrow, then what ends up happening is you'll start to manipulate and control in order to veer your husband away from that path of which you are afraid. But in order to have submission, you must trust in God and realize that God is in control, that God is the one who is ordering our steps.

You see that connection, that correlation? Maybe on a lesser level or not on such an extreme level, this can apply to other things. Maybe your husband is seeking to change his job, but you are in fear because if he changes his

job, what will we do with the money? What if the business that he wants to start doesn't produce an income where we can live comfortably? What will be of our children? What will happen about putting them in school? Maybe your husband says, "I want to put them in this school," and you say, "I want to put them in that school," or maybe you say you want to home-school. Whatever it may be, there are genuine fears that arise, genuine concerns that arise, but your faith must rest in God who is greater than all those things in order to maintain a submissive spirit to your husband in light of those difficulties.

Therefore, meekness comes to those who understand that the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and wherever He turns it, with us, whoever He wills, that the God that is my God is the God that orders the steps of a good man, that is the God who orders the steps of His people. That man devises his own ways, but the Lord directs his steps. He's the God who can provide for our needs because He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He's the God who even overthrows the plans of the wicked when they set out to overthrow the righteous. And understanding that this God is not just a God out there somewhere in the distance, but He is my God, He's the God that has joined me to this husband, He is the God that has called me to submit, and therefore I will not be afraid, but His purposes for my life will be fulfilled as I am yielding to His authority.

You see, meekness doesn't demand our own rights, it doesn't demand our own way. It's not pushy, it is not selfish or assertive. Rather, submission is the controlled passions that yield to God and don't give way to fear and submit themselves to hope in God. And therefore, submission for the wife is reverential, humble, a yielded submission which obeys the desires of her husband, realizing that you are not two autonomous people living two separate lives under the same roof, but rather you are one, joined together in Christ, and are to work as one. And for that to work, there must be submission.

Now, what submission is not: if you have an unbiblical understanding of submission, two things can happen. You can set up standards that God hasn't set and condemn yourself for not keeping them, which is a very problematic thing to do. Then you always will feel like you're failing. So it's important to realize not only what submission is but what it is not. And so I want to just bring some things out here as we look at that.

Firstly, submission is not merely a concept for women. The Bible is complete with examples of submission that involve all of us. Ephesians 5:21 teaches us that we are all to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. That's the church submitting themselves to one another. The Bible teaches us that Christ submitted Himself to the will of the Father. In

Romans 13:1, the Bible teaches us that we are to submit ourselves to the higher powers, to the authorities, for the powers that be are ordained of God, and we should submit ourselves to them. The Bible also teaches us in Hebrews 13:17 that church members are to submit themselves to the elders of the church.

Now, as we understand this, every Christian is engaged in submission. It is a universal precept of God for all who believe in Him, and therefore, this is not something that is a lesser thing or an inferior thing. This is something that is a Christian thing, and it's important to get that. If you are a Christian, we should be submissive, all of us, in the spheres that God has placed us.

Firstly, submission is universal. Secondly, submission is not at the expense of sinning. The clear passage that we all know of this is Acts 5:29, where the Bible says that we ought to obey God rather than men. This applies equally to the home. Your husband is not Christ to you. You understand that you are to serve him as you would serve Christ, as the church serves Christ, but he is not Christ. Christ is your all, He is your final authority, He is the one to whom you must entirely submit yourself.

In fact, the Bible teaches us that the command to submit is fitting in the Lord, meaning the reason for your submission exists because of the Lord and because of His lordship. Therefore, to obey your husband and sin against the Lord is not right. It is never right to do, and this must be said because it is a very common problem. You cannot please God and sin against Him, and so these commandments will never conflict. You must submit yourself to the Lord. You see, it is the Lord who sets the parameters of your submission, not your husband.

The Bible teaches us that our submission is connected to every sphere of life: the social sphere, even the sexual sphere, even in the business sphere, the church life. You must be very careful that you do not submit yourself to sin in any of those areas. It is right and proper for a wife to refuse to sin and therefore disobey her husband in that context. You are not to lie for him at any time. You are not to give in to his sin. You are not even to cover his sin. Of course, love covers a multitude of sins, but you understand what I mean. There are certain sins that are consistent and need to be dealt with. You are not to cover his sin. You are not to be the subject of domestic abuse and think that it is unsubmitive to deal with that domestic abuse. You are not to yield yourself to any unbiblical perversions, even in the sexual relations. You are not to help him cheat on his taxes. You are not to participate in slander or gossip. At these points, you must graciously say to your husband, "No, I love the Lord more than you." Obviously, do it in a gracious, meek way. There are ways to do that that may be more wise

for your context, but that should be your attitude: that you are ultimately submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, it was Ananias and Sapphira that lied to the Holy Ghost, but Sapphira died with Ananias because she agreed with her husband to lie to the Holy Ghost. This passage that we've been looking at in Colossians 3 says that God will reward every man according to his works, and there is no partiality with God. Therefore, we must realize that submission to your husband does not include sinning against God.

Neither does submission mean giving up independent thought or agreeing with him on everything. That's a very important thing to understand. Many women fail at this point to be a true helper to their husbands because they have this understanding that submission means I have to give up my independent thought, meaning that I can't think for myself and be maybe different in the conclusions. You can still submit gladly to the authority of your husband even though you disagree with the outcomes if it's not a matter of sin. And so, you don't want to give up independent thought. You don't want to be someone who becomes entirely passive and disconnected from your family, from church life, from all of it. And this is a sad reality for many women that they enter into marriage and they say, "Well, there's no point because I don't get the final say. There's no point in thinking through this. There's no point in giving constructive criticism. There's no point in helping my husband in these areas because if I start thinking and start speaking, then it's unsubmitive." Nothing could be further from the truth.

And quite frankly, some husbands make their wives feel that if they have an opinion differing from theirs, they are being unsubmitive, but that is not true either. You see, it is important to realize that God has given you a mind. He has given you an intelligent mind, and therefore, as women, you are to be studious. You are to be people that walk with God. You are to be people that understand the will of God. All the commandments and scriptures still apply to you, and there should be a sense of a kind of independence, and I say that carefully, but of independent thought whereby you can contribute to your husband as a true helpmeet. God has given you a personality that is important, that is to be brought into your relationships.

You see, the virtuous woman, as was read to us by Joseph this morning, is a woman whose husband could safely trust in her. Now think about that. Her husband could safely trust in her. That's because whatever she did, she could manage her own, if I could say that. She went and she bought and she sold, and she did this and she did that, and she worked hard and diligently. She cared for her household, and she was a diligent wife that thought and gave diligence to the things that God had given her and embraced her calling and embraced her role. She wasn't a disconnected

person from reality and so indecisive that she couldn't make any decisions. That is not true. She was actively engaged in independent thought so that her husband could actually entrust her with things that she could go out and do and faithfully and wonderfully do.

And so, don't give up independent thought and become indecisive and unconfident. That's not what submission is. Submission is not being fearful, neither is it being timid. And I think it's very important that we get this because for you to be a true helper to your husband, it includes the use of your heart, your mind, your strength. Strength and honor, the Bible says, are her clothing of this virtuous woman. And so, see to it that you don't give up independent thought and that you don't give up the idea of thinking through things.

Lastly, it does not mean that a wife should give up to influence and exhort her husband. I'm going to finish off with this point in closing, and we're going to look at the illustration of submission next week. But I want you to turn with me to 1 Peter 3:1-4. Again, a wife is to be a woman who doesn't give up efforts to influence or to exhort her husband.

1 Peter 3:1-4, the Word of God says, "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

Now, you may be thinking, "Well, this passage says that I shouldn't say anything." However, that's not necessarily what it's teaching. The context here is very clearly talking about an unbelieving husband who does not obey the word. This is a rejecter of the truth, and what Peter is simply saying is for you to be able to win him and to influence him, you should change him by your life and your meek and quiet spirit, not by your words. That's important, but that context is very clearly for an unbelieving husband.

In a believing couple's relationship, the Bible speaks of many things in Scripture that apply even in the home. A believing husband is a man who obeys the word, receives the Word of God, and loves the law and the Word of God. Therefore, a wise woman, taking these characteristics of a meek and quiet spirit, not being forceful, assertive, or pushy, should speak the Word of God to her husband as a true helpmate.

What Peter is saying is that it doesn't help the unbelieving husband to

shove the word down his throat, but it does help the believing husband to speak the Word of Truth. We know that the Word of God sanctifies, and it's the wisdom of God. As couples, we should submit ourselves to it.

We cannot undermine the rest of Scripture when it comes to our relationships. If the commandment of the Word of God is "open rebuke is better than secret love" (Proverbs 27:5), you can say that applies everywhere, even in the husband and wife relationship. I think we've misunderstood it altogether. There is a place for a woman to correct her husband kindly and gently, saying, "Hun, I don't think the Word of God teaches that. Look at this verse. What do you think we should do? Are you sure you don't want to reconsider?" Making an appeal is okay, and it's not unsubmitive to do that. You are biblically allowed to influence your husband with a submissive spirit and by speaking the Word of God graciously, gently, and tenderly.

The Bible gives us examples: "You who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Does that also apply in the home? Should not a godly wife be almost the first port of call to help restore a husband who's struggling? I would hope so. If she's meant to be a helpmate, she can actually get alongside him and help restore him by reminding him of what the Word of God teaches.

These commands in the Bible don't become redundant in the context of marriage. I would go so far as to say that even in Matthew 18, matters of church discipline, the wife has a responsibility before God in the restoration of her husband to not only go one-on-one but to involve other people. If it means that it goes to the church as a matter of church discipline, then it goes to the church as a matter of church discipline. I know that sounds confronting, but it is important. It is important in a world of abuse and in a world of sin that there are biblical safeguards and there are biblical ways in which a wife can influence and help her husband grow in godliness and in holiness. So, making appeals are appropriate in a relationship.

Let me just help us think about this. As this is in the Lord, are you being submissive to your husband or not? What I mean by that is, is your attitude cultivating a spirit of submission in the home? Is it cultivating love in the home? Is it giving your husband the strength to lead, or is your husband too timid to make decisions, fearing the hammer of his wife or fearing the wrestle that might follow if he asks her to do something or he leads the family in a way that she doesn't like?

I think many husbands are sick of the fight, if I could say, and so they think it's easier just to be a passive man that makes no decisions and does nothing because if I say this, I'm going to have to spend two hours dealing

with her and then also having to then spend a week trying to get our relationship back on track again. Can I just say that should not be the way in a Christian home?

The husband should feel that his headship is affirmed by the wife, acknowledge that this is not a mutual submission, but that she is under his authority. But also, that he can lead freely, knowing that she will be behind him, and he will know that even though she disagrees, she's not going to slam him for it. She's going to just gently say, "Hun, I don't agree with that. Let's consider this, let's consider that."

Let me just say that's important because every time a woman digs her heels in the ground against the will of her husband, what ends up happening is that she plucks down and destroys her house. The Bible says a wise woman builds a house, but a foolish woman plucks it down with her hands. And every time a wife fights and kicks against the authority of her husband and causes an atomic bomb reaction within the household by not submitting to his authority, what ends up happening is she punches a wall in the home. I'm not literally, but maybe in some cases that does happen, but punches a wall in the home in the sense that she tears it down. And in some households, spiritually and figuratively speaking, there are holes all over the place.

All I'm simply saying is, as a Christian wife, be a repairer, be a repairer, be a builder, don't be one who is a destroyer. Remember, it is Satan's intention to destroy you. It's Satan's intention to destroy the home. Do not join hands with Satan against the Christian home and undermine the institution of God. Embrace that which God has given you to do joyfully, joyfully embrace what God has given you to do, and work diligently that you might be a woman whose husband might safely trust in her and a woman who will do him good and not evil, as the Bible says, all the days of his life. Let us pray.