Living to Display God's Grace by Godly Submission in Marriage (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 July 2022

Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Well, would you turn with me to the book of Acts.

The book of Acts, chapter 9. To begin, the title of my message this morning continues to be Living to Display God's Grace by, subtitled, Submitting or Godly Submission in Marriage.
And I will be in 1 Peter, but we're going to begin in Acts and work our way that way. Acts, chapter 9.
I want to relate a story to you based on this first slide.
In our fallen world, submission is an aberration making suffering a necessity. I just want you to think about that for just a moment.
In our fallen world, submission is an aberration making suffering a necessity. And I want to give you an example of this in the life of the Apostle Paul.
[1:16] In chapter 9 of the book of Acts, beginning in verse 1. And now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the way, that is, Christians, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Well, as he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?
And he said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.
The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing.
And leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.
[2:42] Now, there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, here I am, Lord. And the Lord said to him, get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem.
And here he has authority from the chief priest to bind all who call on your name. But the Lord said to him, go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.
Now, notice verse 16. For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. So Ananias departed and entered the house.
And after laying his hands on him, said, brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
[4:06] And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight. And he got up and was baptized. And he took food. And he was strengthened.

Then for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus. And immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogue, saying, he is the son of God.
Verse 16 again. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. This man will suffer untold miseries and hardships and ultimately be martyred for the faith that he was trying to destroy,

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

all because he submitted.
Submission brought all of that into his life for decades. And then he lost his life in an ultimate act of submission to the Lord Jesus Christ and God's will for his life.
Paul learned suffering. And Paul learned submission in suffering. He learned it in this incident and in many other life situations.
[5:32] And like us, Paul could not know all of the details of God's purposes, much less the outcomes of each trial in life that he faced as they were happening to him.

Peter also learned suffering and submission from Jesus. Let me take you to one other place before we turn to read our passage for this morning in 1 Peter.
It's John chapter 21. I'm just giving you another example in the life of another of Jesus' followers, the Apostle John.
And his testimony as he wrote it about Peter and what happened in Peter's life as he confronted the Lord Jesus Christ after Jesus was resurrected.
We're going to pick it up in chapter 21 and verse 15. Here's the interaction that John records between Peter and Jesus.
[6:43] So when they had finished breakfast, this is after Jesus has been resurrected and now he's appeared to his disciples. Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?

And he said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. And he said to him then, tend my lambs. He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
And he said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, shepherd my sheep. Then he said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, do you love me? And so he said to him, Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you. And Jesus said to him, tend my sheep.
Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you and bring you where you do not wish to go.
[7:51] Now this he said, signifying by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to him, follow me.

And Peter did follow him. And because he submitted to Jesus and loved Jesus and did what Jesus said, tend my lambs.
He was also suffering in the way of being imprisoned, being tortured, being beaten, being denied his ability to share his faith and told that more suffering would come his way if he did continue to share the truth about Jesus.
And ultimately, Peter also was martyred because he submitted and he followed Jesus Christ faithfully. This isn't a new concept.
For us as God's people to submit. And Peter's been talking about submission now for weeks as we've been working through this passage together.
[8:59] So let's read in 1 Peter now what Peter is telling us as he continues in this theme of submission that's been running from chapter 2, verse 12, down to where we are now in 1 Peter 3.

1 Peter 3, verse 1. 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 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
Your adornment must not be merely external. Braiding the hair and wearing gold jewelry or putting on dresses, 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.
For in this way, in former times, the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.
And you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. But you husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way as with someone weaker, since she is a woman, and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life so that your prayers will not be hindered.
[10:43] Now, friends, the connection with Peter and Paul is that Jesus uses the details, situations, and the overall context of marriage to teach Christian couples what he taught these men

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

throughout their lives.

The way of suffering and submission as they faithfully follow Jesus Christ. So this suffering that is attached to submission is part and parcel to the reality of being faithful to Jesus.
But it sometimes doesn't feel that way. Sometimes as we suffer in this life, it gets into our head and we can ask ourselves, what am I doing wrong?
You may not be doing anything wrong in terms of like sinning against other people or against the Lord. It may be because you're living in righteousness and obedience and faithfulness to the Lord that you're suffering.
That's more likely as a Christian. So I want you to notice this. Because marriage is a soul union between a man and a woman brought into spiritual oneness, it is fertile ground for Jesus to plant his seeds of spiritual fruit and grow us into his likeness.
[12:12] That's a reality that we live in, bless the Lord, as married Christians, as believing Christians, brought together in a spiritual oneness, a togetherness that is bound by the Holy Spirit.

That's a beautiful and wonderful reality of Christian marriage. Now, just as you might think, different cultures around the world approach marriage in different ways, different traditions, different styles, different kind of habits and ceremonies and ideas about how marriage ought to be played out, different roles that the sexes would play in marriage, men and women.
But folks, people are still people, right? And the issues of marriage in one culture tend to be the issues in another culture.
Now, this was the case with just a few important cultural caveats in the ancient world of Peter's time. People are people, marriage is marriage, people being married in Peter's time as believers were married just like we are in the sense of the Holy Spirit, binding them together in spiritual oneness, bringing two souls together in spiritual oneness.
All of that remains the same, but there are a few important cultural caveats. or qualifications that we want to recognize because they bear heavily on our text for today in our understanding.
[13:47] We've done the same thing as we've looked back into chapter two and we talked about civil authority and Nero. We talked about what it was like for slaves under masters in this particular time in biblical history.

Peter writes with all of that in mind to his specific readership and their cultural context and the things that they're dealing with as they submit in their lives.
Now, we want to take a look at what Peter's talking about now. What were some of those caveats or cultural qualifications that we need to know about Peter's time concerning marriage and a wife's role during this particular time?
All right. The first thing that I want to point out to you is this. First, wives or women in general were devalued. It is a reality, a historical reality.
Women were devalued by Gentile society and as outlined by one commentator in this particular way. Look at this quote. Ah, where's my quote?
[14:55] I didn't do it. Let me read it to you. Dominant among the elite was the notion that the woman was by nature inferior to the man because she lacked the capacity for reason that the male had.

How about that, ladies? Giggle, giggle. She was ruled rather by her emotions and was as a result given to poor judgment, immorality, intemperance, wickedness, avarice.
She was untrustworthy, contentious, and as a result it was her place to obey. That's an ancient commentator explaining how this society in Peter's day viewed women in general.
That's one of the issues. Second, denied. Denied. In the Greco-Roman world of Peter's time, wives were required upon marrying their husbands to adopt the friends of their husbands and to worship the gods of their husbands.
It didn't matter what kind of friends these women had coming into the relationship. It didn't matter who these women worshipped or what they believed religiously.
[16:25] When they married that man they took on his friends and she had to adopt his religious beliefs. End of story.

And that was the accepted norm of the day. Now, you can see the issue. When a wife was converted to Christianity, her denouncement by necessity as she submitted to the Lord Jesus she would have to denounce his gods.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That was seen as an unruly and radical departure from the accepted cultural norms for submission in marriage.
and historically there are accounts of women being significantly abused because they were faithful to the Lord Jesus and their husbands took advantage of their legal right to punish them because of their subversion.
That's what Peter's writing about. Third, doubted. Doubted. Christian wives lived under a cloud of doubt and suspicion cast on them by a society that viewed Christians on the whole as a bunch of evildoers and haters of society.
[17:50] Those of you who've been here through this series remember me mentioning this a couple of sermons ago as I set the historical context for you that Peter was writing about as he told them to obey civil authority.

They were under Nero. Under Nero during this time people on the whole in Gentile society saw the fact that Christians called another person Lord not Caesar would not bow to Caesar and had to in many cases remove themselves from society because they couldn't participate in the paganism that society was defined by.
So society began to look at Christians as haters of society. They hate us. They're a bunch of rebel rousers and seditionists. They're troublemakers.
They're people that we need to keep our eye on. And ultimately Nero made it to where they were being eliminated by the hundreds if not the thousands. So this is the way that Christians were viewed.
So the Christian call of holy living to please the Lord kind of slapped pagan society in the face. as a result then Christian wives were already viewed as seditious anarchists proud troublemakers by the general public.
[19:18] Now doesn't that sound horrible? You almost want to ask yourself what chance does a Christian wife have in a society like that? Little to none.

Little to none. And so Peter writes this. Now let these words sink in. 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 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
You understand what he's telling them? I understand that some of you are married to unbelieving disobedient unruly God-hating men submit to them.
Now we just leave it there. Should I close my Bible and say amen? Now there's much more much more we need to deal with. Let's work through our text. Let's see how Peter lovingly helps these Christian husbands and wives work through these issues biblically.
Biblically. Now remember please if you will the overall context of what we're looking into today. Let me just remind you real quickly and especially for those who haven't been here.
[20:39] Now I've renumbered this a little bit so if you look back in your notes the numbers aren't going to jive but just bear with me. The command to submit to civil authority. The command to submit as Christ's servant and the call to suffer as Christ's servant.

That's where we've been and now today we add this one. The command to submit in Christian marriage. So you can see there is a running theme through this section of Peter's letter where he's dealing with some very practical matters and he's answering these cultural issues with submit.
Have an attitude and a heart of submitting and now he's going to apply it to Christian marriage. The question that we want to deal with is this.
what is a Christian wife's submission to look like in her life, particularly in her attitude. I'm going to give you the ABC's of a Christian wife's submission.
We're only going to do A today. We'll have to do B and C, Lord willing, next Lord's day, next Sunday. We'll deal with the A first, the ABC's of what a Christian wife's submission looks like, whether she's married to a believer or an unbeliever.
[21:56] I'm going to clarify for you as we move through this. We'll begin with then the A, the attitude of her life. In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands.

In the same way is like saying, and next, as Peter moves through his letter, or Peter might say this, and also, or also wives, so he's building.
It introduces this particular section or passage of scripture as it continues to connect with his thought and bring his readership into a stronger focus now into family life.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

He's talked about public life or civil life. He's talked about the workplace. He's given us some examples from Jesus' life of life. He's given the things are so important.
Now he brings the perspective into family life. The circle has grown smaller and smaller until now. It focuses in on a very, very intimate aspect of how these people live.
[23:07] It introduces the section. women's role in submission. And what he says in the same way, it does not mean that wives are like slaves. Don't go back up into the previous context and compare a wife submitting to her husband like a slave submitting to a master.

Don't do that. That would not be contextually correct. It's not comparing the wife's role in submission with the slave's role in submission. It's simply a way of connecting the theme of submission in each of the categories I just mentioned that Peter's been addressing.
Submission to civil authority, workplace authority, and now marriage. So the question at hand is this. What is the character or the nature of this submission wives are to give to their own husbands?
Submission is the same word Peter used in the previous contexts. It's hupotasso. You've heard me use that word with you now several times.
It is the same form of the root word hupotasso, which means to line up under or to arrange yourself under. It's a military term that has the word picture of soldiers lining up in formation under their authority, their commander.
[24:26] If you've been familiar with the military, you've watched movies, you've been in the military yourself, you know that the guy in authority hollers certain commands and that gives you this signal about what you're supposed to do and where you're supposed to be.

That's the idea. Arrange yourself under the authority in accordance with the authority. This is what Peter is talking about as he speaks to this command given to believing wives and not to women in general.
That's very important. important. This is not a principle that we would apply across the board to women in general that whenever you women are in the presence of men, you submit.
What does it say? Submit to your own husband. So my wife isn't required to submit to you as a man in the same way that she's required by the Lord to submit to me.
You understand now what we're saying? All right. So let's keep the principles clear and clean as we move through this together. The Lord then commands that Christian wives arrange themselves under or willingly put themselves in submission to the authority of their husbands.
[25:50] Now hang with me. The primary reason marriages struggle under this command is sin. Sin on the part of the husband. Sin on the part of the wife.

It could be in each of their cases. It could be that they have hearts of selfishness in a given moment or situation. It could be pride, greed, envy.
It could be fear. It could be a certain fear that if I submit, if I do what the Lord tells me to do in light of who my husband is, I can't trust my husband to do the right thing as I submit to him.
And I make myself more vulnerable when I submit to him like that. And because I don't trust him, that puts me in a precarious position. I've counseled this so many times in so many levels. Sometimes the threat has been so bad that I've had to help the woman find a place to hide. Sometimes it's been so bad that by helping the woman, my family was put in danger so that the man that got mad at me for doing what my wife and I did for his wife, whom he was abusing, he came after her and stopped her.
[27:03] He followed her home. He broke into our house. He vandalized our cars. He broke into my office and stole private files. This stuff gets very real very fast.

This is the world that we live in. This is the kind of thing that we face. And so I understand. I have firsthand knowledge of dealing with ladies who are in very difficult situations.
In all my years of counseling and doing ministry like this, I've only ever had one case of husband abuse where the husband was the one being abused. By far, all of the cases that I've dealt with, save one in my memory, have been that the woman, the wife, is being abused by the husband. And many, many, many times, this was the case with people who professed Jesus as their Lord and Savior, including the man who was doing the abusing.
So the fact that we're in the church doesn't exclude us from the reality of these things. It's very, very real. So the context that we're dealing with, friends, is obviously marriage.
[28:13] And the command to submit applies then, in principle, to all Christian wives. Now, I'm making a big deal of this because I understand that many of you may have heard this text or been

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

referred to this text only as a text that applies to women who are married to unbelieving men.

Not true. The text is not applicable to wives who are married to unbelieving men exclusively. It's applied to all wives. The command is for all Christian wives believing wives to submit to their husbands.
Not just to wives with disobedient or unbelieving husbands. All right. How do we know that? That's fair. How do we know that? All right. Look at it with me. So that even if any of them, you understand that?
Any of them are disobedient. Other translations have so that even if some do not obey. So this takes in all husbands married to Christian wives and then Peter focuses his special attention on those who live disobedient lives, husbands who live disobedient lives.
Not every Christian wife will have a disobedient husband, but every Christian wife must nurture a heart and life of submission to her own husband, whether he is faithful to Christ or not.
[29:35] a wife's marital submission is always about her heart attitude to God as she submits.

Always. So wives, your submission is not measured by your husband's relationship with Christ. Your submission to your husband is measured by your relationship with Jesus Christ.
Christ. An example of that reality is in our context. If you look back up into chapter 2, verse 21, you will see an example of this that Peter is already used to lay the groundwork to say what he just said. Chapter 2, verse 21. You have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps.
In 221, Peter gave us Jesus as our pattern that we're to trace over, that is to follow in his same steps as we meekly submit in hardship.
[30:43] And folks, whether you're married to a believer or an unbeliever, marriage is hard. Soul oneship and soul companionship is something that we grow in.

It's not innate. We don't understand that apart from the spirit leading and teaching us over time. Over time in our marriages. Now, the question is this.
Is this attitude of submission our attitude? Is it the desire of our heart to be submissive? To be meek and to be humble in our relationships with each other?
The reason each Christian is will is to willingly follow Jesus in suffering injustice is because he willingly suffered injustice for each of us.
You remember that from last week, friends? That that is the heart attitude. Each Christian is to have and to hold as we walk with Jesus in this life, whether you're a man and a husband or a woman and a wife.
[31:49] Each of us are to have a heart attitude that we are willing to suffer for Jesus sake because he willingly suffered for each of us. That is the root and the foundation of what we're being called to live out in this life.

It is a precious privilege. Is that our heart attitude? Do we understand that this is what we're being called to? May I remind you, friends, from last Sunday of what Paul's words in Philippians were to us?
For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake. Jesus is your example.
May I remind you again from the beginning in our fallen world, submission is an aberration making suffering a necessity. As we submit to this reality, this granted for Christ's sake privilege, we will suffer.
Submission will bring suffering in our life as Christians. It's axiomatic. It's a truism. It's how we're called to live. Now, we don't need to be gloomy and dumpy and depressed about that.
[33:04] Peter will go on to say, as I continue to remind you, this is where he's taking us. Chapter four, verse 12. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you, but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing.

You see that? So that also at the revelation of his glory, you may rejoice with exultation. Just understand that being faithful, following in the footsteps of Jesus, Jesus will bring suffering as you submit to Christ in your followership and discipleship.
You will suffer for the sake of Jesus. Okay? That doesn't stop. You're not excluded from that reality in your married life.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Even as two believers. God will use your marriage to test you more than he will use, deeper than he will use anything else in your life because of that fertile ground of soul oneness.
Do you understand? It's like looking into, all right, look, I look into the face of my wife and many times the reflection that I get back from her reflects failure and sin and weakness in my life.
[34:32] Do you know how hard that was for me when I first got married and the honeymoon thing started to wear off and I started to recognize that, well, what's going on here?

What happened to the, you know, lava? It ain't all heart and flowers and stuff anymore. And boy, that rocked my world. Then I had to come to terms with this.
I need to stop pointing the finger at her and recognize that what scripture does as I look into her heart and face as best I can as her husband, her countenance, her demeanor.
I don't mean I can see her heart, but what she's displaying to me. I recognize that much of the woundedness that I see, I caused. I'm causing that.
My sin, my failure, my weakness, my lack is bringing, bringing on. There's a certain grief there. I didn't know what to do with that.
[35:30] I didn't know how to, how to. And boy, if you go into that thing already feeling a little bit of self-consciousness and a sense of insecurity, can you imagine what that does to you?

This is why people come in for counseling and do this, all right? So who's going to start? And they both go, and then you have to play referee and say, okay, ho, ho, ho.
And then what do each of them want to do? I want you to hear my case because I want you to be convinced of the legitimacy of my case. And then the other one does the same thing.
And then they both get mad when you don't take their side. And you put Jesus right in the middle of them and say, we're going to let the Lord Jesus Christ sort this out. I don't have the wisdom to sort this all out, but I know who does.
And you call them to Christ. That's very oversimplified, but that's the basic reality. That's what you're doing. I just spent four years of my life learning that little circle and all the things that are involved in focusing on that circle.
[36:43] Christian sisters, please hear me. Before you were brought to faith in Christ, it was not in your old nature to willingly submit to your husband.

But, Christian sisters, in your new nature as God's daughters, you are reborn and redesigned, refitted to submit to your husband.
It is God's will for you to do it. And this design is so important to Christian marriage that Paul rooted a Christian wife's submission to her husband in the pattern of the church's submission to Jesus.
Do you hear that? Paul rooted a wife's submission to her husband in the pattern, rooted it right into the pattern of the church's submission to Jesus Christ.
It's Ephesians 5. We're going to turn there a couple of times. I can't preach a sermon like this without coming to this text. Ephesians 5. Do I have a cell for that?
[38:01] Yes, here it is. Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the savior of the body.

But notice, but as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.
That's Bible. That's not Jeff. That's not Greg. That's Bible. Paul's teaching then, if you go back to 1 Peter, Paul's teaching then meshes with Peter's.
And it helps us understand that the command concerns the submission of all Christian wives in all eras, so that it is not limited to wives with unbelieving husbands or to Peter's readers at his time in biblical history.
I have heard all those arguments from women who have come to me to say, we do not have to obey this because this was a command that was grounded in ancient history and ancient society.
[39:14] It does not apply to modern times, etc., etc., etc. Folks, I know you have to take my word a little bit when I give you some of these personal anecdotes or illustrations, but I do try to do this out of my life, not to highlight myself, but to give you the reality that as I speak these things to you, we've lived through these things.

I'm candid with you about some of my weaknesses, as I pointed out, with my own marriage and my wife, and as God has taught me and helped me and grown me.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And I'm still growing and learning. And now I share with you from times when Suzanne and I were ministering, and this kind of thing jumped right into the reality of our life, how we were ministering. I had a lady come to me at one point, and actually she demanded. She demanded that I come to her house and sit down because she wanted to set me right.
And so I had learned, by that time I had learned, I'd been in ministry a few years by then, Matt. So you learn quickly, don't you, brother?
[40:26] I brought a witness with me. I brought a guy with me. And we sat down. Now, I'm not exaggerating. For two hours. For two hours. I sat there listening to this woman, a Christian woman in my church, a woman I served, her and her husband.

Her husband's sitting right there next to her. And I listened to her tell me for the first hour without interruption why I was wrong to preach from the text about a wife submitting to a husband and about women being submissive in church services from 1 Timothy 2.
I think it's 2. And why that was all wrong, why I was all messed up. And then I think I might have asked a clarifying question or something at about the hour mark until I got another hour.
A book came out written by a youth pastor from a liberal church. And that was used as a reference to set me straight. And then she added at about, you know, I don't know, hour and 45 minutes or so, because we were there for about two and a half hours.
She added that, oh, by the way, because I know the kinds of things you believe, I want you to know that my husband is in full accord with me on this.
[41:43] So I am not going over my husband. And this was her husband the entire time. The entire time. I don't think the man said five words.

Is it real? Yes, it's real. Is it ugly? Yes, it's ugly. It's ugly when men are cowards and they don't stand for Jesus Christ and submit to Jesus Christ and act like men.
Humble, meek, courageous, God-fearing men who are willing to lay down their lives and give an example to the world and to their wives.
This is what it means and costs to follow Jesus faithfully. Honey, will you hold my hand and follow me? And we'll do this together. We need men like that.
And then I think it might be just a tad bit easier for wives to trust those men and follow those men and submit with those men and pay the price they see their men paying for Christ's sake.
[42:52] Amen? So guess who I faulted more than the woman in that scenario? That man sitting there shaking his head.

That's right. Give it to him, baby. Ridiculous. I didn't say that at the time. I wasn't allowed.
These are real situations in context. That's why I'm saying to you.
What we're talking about here concerns the submission of all Christian wives in all eras. So that it's not limited to wives with unbelieving husbands or just to Peter's readers at this time.
Now, Peter's overall concern is that the marriage reflects well on Jesus. So Christian wives give a clear testimony of the humility and submission of Jesus as they submit to their husbands.
[44:00] That submission to their husbands becomes a larger picture of the way the church is called to submit to its husband, Jesus. The bride of Christ, all of us, bowing in submission to the Lord and husband of the church, Jesus.

And as a wife submits to her husband, it becomes a picture of that larger reality for the church of the Lord Jesus. Ladies, I hope that you see what kind of power there is in that reality.
The kind of privilege and power, ladies, that you hold and the potential you wield to exalt Jesus Christ as you submit to your husband.
Now, you might wonder, ladies, and it's very fair. You might wonder why Peter gave six verses to deal with a believing wife's submission and why he only gave one verse of direction to the believing husband.
This is the point where any comedian would have some wisecrack. I just I don't have that. I tried to think of one to let, you know, lighten it up. And I'm just not a comedian.
[45:11] I'm a preacher. So no joke. I'm just going to tell you the truth. All right. You appreciate that? Here's the answer. Why six verses for the women and one verse for the man?

What's that all about? It's because Peter is dealing with the reality. What's the reality? Converted Christian wives are in the more vulnerable position in the marriage in this society, even in the best of circumstances.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

So Peter wants to help them out. Just as in our day and time, Peter's readers were being converted from a very vile culture, a culture that was upside down in its view of men and women and marriage. That's just like ours. No different. These people knew nothing of what God says about the precious nature and value of women. They didn't know anything about God's designs for the blessings of marriage between two sanctified souls.
How could they? I want you to look with me again, if you will, at just one example of God's beautiful, beautiful design for what marriage is all about.
[46:25] This time, I'd like to ask you to turn to Ephesians five with me. And now we're going to read the greater context of that passage, not just the part about the wives submitting. And we'll actually start in verse 21.

That speaks to the reality of all believers humbly submitting to each other as they walk faithfully with the Lord. And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
That is, out of reverence for Jesus. Out of a high and holy reverence for Jesus Christ, Christians, believers should be meekly and humbly submitting to one another.
Deferring to one another. Now, verse 22. Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church.
He himself being the savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her.
[47:37] Do you see the comparison there? What a command. What a calling. Husbands, you need to love your wife just as Christ loves his wife and willingly laid down his life for her.

So that he might, what, purpose? Sanctify her. Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. This is a husband's primary, paramount, clarifying biblical concern for his wife.
That in his life, he may live in a way where he helps her wash herself in the truth of God's word as she follows Jesus Christ. And he should be willing to submit to and sacrifice anything and everything about his life to help her in that journey.
So that nothing, nothing would be too much to ask of him. If God would use it in her life to help further purify her, sanctify her, encourage her, help her grow in grace, blossom and flower as a daughter in the Lord's sight.
Nothing, nothing, no hobby, no pursuit, no personal interest. That all of that gets sacrificed on the altar of this passage of scripture.
[48:59] Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church and willingly laid down his life for her.

What a calling. What a revolutionary truth that would change the face of this planet. If just the Christian men who are saved today would walk in this way.
That he might present, verse 27, to himself, the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.
That's what we want for our wives. More than anything else. More than we want them to be happy. More than we want them to have all this stuff. We want to point them to Jesus that they would be holy and blameless before him.
So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. Boy, he gets down to it, doesn't he? He who loves his own wife loves himself.
[50:08] How about that? For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of his body.

For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife. There's that soul union, that one flesh relationship. The two shall become one flesh.
This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. See? Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.
And the world hates that truth. Hates it. Despises it. Fights against it.
New believers. New believers in Peter's time, new believers today, they don't know how to live this out together.
[51:12] I admit it to you. I was a Christian. Suzanne was a Christian. We married. Great church. Great counseling. Great people around us.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

We were clueless. We didn't know how to. We read the books. And you know what? We kept reading the books and thinking, yeah, but we got this thing.
We weren't like all puffy, puffy. We were just so starry-eyed and everything, you know? Listen, I'm on the phone with my mama yesterday. And I don't know how we got on.
Remember? She was listening in, and I said something like, Mama, why did you let me get married? We go back and look at the pictures of our wedding.
We were babies. How could you do that to us? Why didn't somebody come up and say, you're not ready? You're not. We wouldn't listen. We wouldn't have listened.
[52:06] We were engaged. We set the date. A year came. And as that year came for the date, didn't we? We both looked at each other and went, we're not ready. We're not ready.

And we weren't. And so we, now I don't advocate this. We waited. We waited. Now, I got out of Dodge, okay? You put two and two. I got out of Dodge.
We're going to wait another. I went to another state to go to college, all right? I came back. I came back. I came back and got married. Yes.
You with me? Absolutely. That's right. These are the practical realities of living life. Trying to be faithful to Christ.
We knew nothing. These people are marrying. Some of them are finding themselves being converted. These, particularly Peter's dealing with the women.
[53:04] These Christian women, they've been converted to Christ. They're married to unbelieving husbands. They've had this entire pagan lifestyle revolving around self-pleasure and all the different ways that society caters to self-pleasure.

Now they're coming to Christ. They're beginning to grow in their understanding of the Lord and personal purity and that there are things that displease Jesus and grieve the spirit.
And because they love God, they don't want to do that. Now they're faced with a dilemma. How do I deal with my husband and the law? The law that gives him the right to punish and abuse me if I don't do what he says.
How'd you like to live in that? And Peter doesn't tell these women. There's not a list here that tells these women, here are all the circumstances you might face and here are all the different nuances of how you can deal with it.
He doesn't do that. What does he say? Submit to your husbands, even if they're unbelievers. Oh my goodness. Has he lost his mind? Does he not realize what he's commanding these women to do?
[54:13] Does he not understand the repercussions and consequences of what this could mean for them? Yes, friends, he knew all of that. He lived in it. Remember, this is a man who's going to become crucified upside down.

This guy gets the price. Ladies, don't underestimate that Peter, because he's a man, doesn't get it. He gets it. He gets it. And he's trying to minister to these ladies.
He's trying to minister to these Christian sisters. He knows they're in the vulnerable position. He wants to help them. These people who are facing this, they needed to be taught.
And it took time. And it took struggle for these principles to take root and grow. We need to be patient with each other and gracious toward each other. As we see people in marriages struggling with this.
Folks, I'm going to tell you straight from the pulpit. You have two pastors here who are married. Greg, how long y'all been married? 30? 30 years.
[55:19] I should have said Merevi. I'm sorry, bro. I threw you under the bus there. I'm sorry. I said 31st. All right. He's good. All right. He's exonerated. We've been married 38 years.

All right. That's a long time. We can tell you. We understand marriage is tough. So any of you in this congregation who face situations or times or moments when you're at odds or you're struggling or things aren't quite like you want them to be.
You have two pastors who live there too. And we get it. And listen. It's okay for you that you struggle. Here's what's not okay. It's not okay for you to struggle alone.
Please don't do that. Please be willing to come to us. If you don't want Greg and I and Merevi and Suzanne to sit down with you and offer you some discipleship and to come along and hold your hand and work with you through maybe a series of issues over a little period of time and just help you get through bumps.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Okay, fine. You don't want that. But at least do this. At least come to us and let us know that there's a struggle happening and say, will you pray for us? Because you know what we will?
[56:28] We will do that. We will join you in constant prayer and intercede on your behalf. God will help you in that. But don't be surprised now if we get into your life about that.

Don't get all messed up now when you come and do that and then we pursue. We love you. We don't want you to be alone. We don't want you to be one of the sheep that are two of the sheep that are kind of lagging behind in the rank and file here because you're struggling and this is going on and you're getting further and further away from all the rest of us because of this is happening.
We want to circle around and bring you. Why? Because we know you're vulnerable back here. You're vulnerable. We don't want that. There are worse things than you struggling in your marriage. We don't want that. Right? You with me? You know you're getting all this for free. I left my notes. Where am I? All right.
Let me ask this. What if a Christian found him or herself? I'm almost done. What if a Christian found him or herself married to an unbeliever? Because that's more the context. Let me just go back and read it again because you see the A is really the first half of verse 1.
[57:48] In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands. All right? But now he's obviously there's more to this concern with this command so that even if any of them, not all of them, I know not all of you are married to men who are disobedient to God.

I know that. Some of you are married to men who are following the Lord. But even if some of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your life.
That is, your chaste and respectful behavior. What happens if I'm married to an other? Does that change God's design and his instructions, his expectations on the saved spouse?
That's what they expect when they come in and they say this kind of stuff. They expect to hear, oh, well. Yeah.
No, it doesn't. No, it doesn't. It's just harder. It's just harder. You're married to an unbeliever who's not following the Lord, who doesn't share your faith in Christ, your love for Christ, your love for the church, the priorities of heaven, building treasure in heaven.
[59:07] He doesn't understand any of that. Not only does he not understand, he's actually anti. Sometimes he even is jealous of your involvement with the church and with God's people and the things you do.

Sometimes he even lets you know. You spend too much time. What happens here is this. Peter addresses the most difficult aspect of this command among those who were most at risk in this situation.
Believing wives. What if my husband isn't following Christ? Answer. You still submit to him, even if it means you suffer for it for Christ's sake.
That's the text. Now hear this. But does this mean that Christian wives are to give themselves over to abuse by their husbands in the name of suffering for Christ's sake?
No. Are there limits and exceptions to a wife's submission? Yes.
[60:14] But it doesn't involve a wife's personality or preferences. And it's interesting to me, Peter doesn't mention any exceptions in this command any more than he did when he told us to obey civil authorities or when he told us to obey in the workplace.

There aren't any clauses, caveats, or conditions. We're going to have to read canonically to see that. We're going to have to go into other places in Scripture to see that there are biblical exceptions to a wife's submission to her husband.
What would the first one be that you could think of? What would be the first and highest reason that a wife would have to meekly and humbly, in a spirit of courage and faithfulness, because he's going to say later on, without fear, have to say no to her husband?
What do you think? God commands. Somebody said sin. Sin. If a husband, in lifestyle choice, in what he's demanding of her, in what he's saying you're going to do with him, if he is going to require or cause or bring about a woman sinning, a wife sinning against the Lord, she has to decline in order to remain faithful to Christ.
Christ. Because there is an authority in her life higher than her husband. Who is that? Christ. There is an authority in the church higher than Greg and I in our pastoral shepherding.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[61:47] Who is that? Who is the Lord of the church? Who is the Lord of Grace Church? Christ. Greg and I follow Christ. It's very similar to how we do when I said in the marriage, honey, hold my hand and follow me while I follow Jesus.

And I'll trust you to help me do that more faithfully, because God put you in my life for that reason. I need to listen to you. Pray with you. Struggle with you. Wrestle with you.
We'll do this together. Greg and I, we lock arms, we move forward, and we say to you, follow your pastors as we follow Jesus. Help us do that faithfully.
And there are ways that you can do that. See? This is the pattern. Submission is a part of the Christian life. It's built into the DNA of who we are.
It's not something that we loved or wanted or looked for before Christ. But as we came to know Christ, it became part of our new nature. Submitting to the Lord.
[62:47] Submitting to each other. So, yes, there are limitations. It doesn't involve your personality and preferences. I've heard ladies say to me, well, that's just my personality.

I'm just outspoken. He's just going to have to get over it. He knows I speak my mind. He knew I was high maintenance when he married me.
Oh, baby. Femi is a pastor. Matt's pastor.
Dale's pastor. You get to where you do this enough, you know within five minutes, you're going to buckle this belt, and you're going to pull the strap over this shoulder and buckle that one, and then you're going to put the helmet on.
This is fixing to get real. Listen. Why is it that Peter doesn't mention all the exceptions and caveats?
[63:49] Why doesn't he list all of this? Are Peter and God and the Bible insensitive to the plight of abused wives? No. No. Now, next time, we don't have time now.

Next time, we'll see even more clearly the care. The loving care God has taken to establish the value and equality of men and women as God's children.
Equal in the sight of God. And how God's instruction about a wife's submission has nothing to do with superiority and inferiority. That's what the world hears when it hears submission.
They hear superiority and inferiority. They don't have the Holy Spirit to help them understand the equality that God has built into men and women in his sight. And yet, he has given them different roles within that reality.
So, it isn't that women are less than men in God's sight. It has nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with the way God designed human beings to relate to each other.
[64:56] And in doing so, how they reflect the Godhead. How they reflect what God has built into his world.

He gets to choose that. We're called to live faithfully in it. So, we don't turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to anyone being abused in marriage.
I haven't that I know of. And we have gone through some really sticky, hard, difficult, dangerous times as we've ministered to women in these situations before.
Suffice for now to say this. This is what you told me just a minute ago. Look. The exception to these commands. I put it in writing so that you could be very clear about it.
Involves saying no to sin. Any request, demand, or lifestyle choice a husband makes on his believing wife which would cause her to sin. She needs to decline that in order to remain faithful to Jesus.
[65:58] Now, to help Christians balance this principle with submission. Peter held out the Lord Jesus as our example. So, friends, listen. Peter is not dealing with an issue of a wife's rights.

That's not his concern here. He's dealing with a society that already devalued and abused women. It's already a reality. He can't overturn that. God's not leading him to try to overturn that.
What Peter's trying to do is to help Christian wives suffer well as they follow Jesus so they can showcase the goodness and grace of Jesus.
And win any of their unbelieving husbands to Christ. This is Peter's concern. In other words, here it is.
Look. What Peter tackles in the following verses is his prescription for the priorities of a wife's godly submission. He tells her what she should shun and what she should focus on.
[67:01] What she should shun and focus on. By necessity, we've taken time in this particular message to focus on the attitude of your heart.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And the attitude of your heart needs to be that of embracing by faith that it is God's will for every believing wife to submit to her husband.
That is God's will. Here's a way for you to think about this issue as we draw to a close. Please think about this.
Here it is. Ask yourself, Do I struggle with submitting to my husband because I'm striving to accept this or because I'm striving to apply this?
There's a big difference. It's critical. It's critical because your obedience and application of every bit of what Peter goes on to say in this passage hinges on your heart attitude of willing submission.
[68:08] In other words, in other words, here it is. When you have your heart settled on your submission to your husband being rooted in your submission to Jesus, it will spiritually propel you light years ahead in your practical day-to-day ability to willingly submit to your husband, even in the face of his faults and failures towards you.

Whether he's saved or not. That's our beginning. That's our beginning in this matter. That's our need. It's our need. And that is God's design for our freedom, our peace, and our faithfulness to Jesus in our marriages and in our families.
And friends, dear God in heaven, I can say it this way. Oh, Lord, how our children need to see this in our lives today. Oh, how they need to see this.
It doesn't guarantee they'll come to Christ. It doesn't guarantee that they'll live the Christian life. But our kids need to see mom and dad living like this.
Yeah. And with God's grace working in our lives and as we hold each other accountable and minister to each other across these aisles throughout the week and build each other up in the faith, we can do this.
[69:31] We can live this life in honor to Jesus. Wives can submit to their husbands. Husbands can sacrificially love their wives and lay their life down to serve their wives.

And we can see a wonderful thing happening as we model that for our community. Let's pray together. Father, we've taken time today to outline just half of a verse.
And we, because we're weak and we struggle in our attitudes with submitting to you, both men and women, both husbands and wives submitting to you.
We struggle with submitting to each other. We struggle with trusting each other. We pick at each other. We play games with each other.
We act selfishly toward each other. And God, it grieves the Holy Spirit most of all that as Christians, we would treat each other this way.
[70:30] And so we ask you to please forgive us. We ask now that you would make us, as your people, a wonderful example and testimony in our marriage life of the grace of Christ working in us, teaching us submission, teaching us the way of deference, teaching us the way of Jesus in Philippians 2, where you were willing to take on the form of a human being and leave all of that in heaven that you enjoyed with the Father, even to the point of giving up all of that so that you could be crucified on a cross.

So God, teach us so that we would not think more highly of ourselves than we should. Teach us to think of others as being more important than ourselves, starting with our spouse if we're married.
And Lord, help us to take these things to heart and to realize and recognize that what you're calling us to is beautiful and powerful, but it does go against the cultural norm.
And so we need to be prepared to suffer for doing what is right and patiently endure it for the Lord's sake and for the sake of those looking in. We pray now that you would be honored and glorified in our lives as we continue to bow our hearts before the truth of Scripture and try to live this out faithfully to you.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host