

Bringing Homelife into Harmony with Heaven

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[0 : 0 0] Well, I'm taking a bit of a right turn on you today.

So rather than go back to 1 Peter, we're going to be in Colossians. And I have something in mind for you. So we can turn to Colossians chapter 3.

Colossians 3. We'll pick up, God willing, we'll pick up in 1 Peter next Lord's Day and finish out the section that Peter has been expounding on now in his letter for, gosh, the last, I don't know, six, seven weeks we've been in that section on submitting in our lives as Christians.

We're going to continue in that theme. But I thought what I do today, since we took some time from 1 Peter chapter 2 or 3 to look at the first part of that chapter, verses 1 through 7.

1 through 6 in 1 Peter chapter 3 deals with wives submitting to their husbands. What does that look like in the Lord? Why is it necessary? Then in verse 7, he dealt with husbands, at least past tense in terms of how we've dealt with it over the past few weeks.

[1 : 3 1] Last Sunday, I preached from verse 7. What I thought I would do now is use something from Paul that dovetails very nicely with Peter's theme and bring together these scriptural ideas of what it means for a wife to submit to her husband in the Lord and what it looks like and means for a husband to provide sacrificial love and headship leadership in the home as those things mesh, as a wife's submission and a husband's sacrificial love come together in God's design for home life.

That's what I'd like to do today because in 1 Peter, it was kind of spread out for us. So now we'll get to look at what those two things look, those two concepts look like as we bring them together.

So the title of my message, Bringing Home Life into Harmony with Heaven. It's another way of saying we are concerned that we live out God's will for married life as believers.

We are concerned with God's will as we parent, raise our children. Even as empty nesters as Suzanne and I are now, we are reaping the benefits and the fruit of many, many years now, 38 years of marriage, trying to live according to God's will as married people.

Like you, we're imperfect in that. Like you, we stumble along. We're sometimes very weak in it. We've sinned against each other in our married life.

[3 : 1 2] We've forgiven each other and we live in this harmony as we live to please Jesus together. That's what we want to focus on as I bring this message to you.

So we're in Colossians 3. It's a very brief couple of verses that we'll actually focus on. But let's read through the context of what Paul deals with in chapter 3, beginning in verse 18.

Wives, be subject to or be in submission to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Now that's the text for today. Very concise but power-packed.

Let's read on and gain the context of what Paul's talking about. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things. For this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

[4 : 16] Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth.

Not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men.

Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequence of the wrong which he has done and that without partiality.

Now for those of you who have been in 1 Peter with us, this sounds a lot like Peter, doesn't it? A lot like Peter in the section that he did on obeying civil authority, obeying authority in the workplace, the example of Jesus, wives submitting to husbands, husbands loving their wives sacrificially.

This is a power-packed section of scripture. Again, we'll just do the first couple of verses. Now, some things to think about as we move into this together. Who were these people?

[5 : 25] We won't necessarily answer all these questions in great specifics, but who were these people? Are they like you? Are they like me? Who's Paul writing to?

What was happening in the life of the church that these people attended? What prompted Paul to write these particular things to this particular group of people, this church, at this time in history?

In what ways were their cultural and family and church situations may be different from ours in our modern time?

And in what ways might they have experienced similar family issues and societal issues as they tried to raise their kids and be married in their culture at that time?

I just want to say this to you now. Think about it with me if you would. Think about it with me. We cannot responsibly interpret, understand, and apply the teaching of scripture to our own lives apart from factoring out our own biases.

[6 : 40] Dealing with the gaps in our understanding concerning the historical, cultural, lingual, doctrinal context of any part of the Bible.

This is all basic stuff to understanding scripture and being able to apply the truth of scripture in our lives.

All right? And look at this with me if you would. With any doctrine, teaching, or instruction in the Bible, the question we must ask and answer, am I truly seeking to allow the Bible to teach me what it means by what it says?

All right? Responsible Bible interpretation is hard work. There is no question about that, and there aren't any shortcuts. It's the work, though, of every follower of Jesus Christ.

You need to be a Bible interpreter, and you are whether you recognize it or not. Every time you read the scripture, whether you're studying it or reading it devotionally, you're making interpretations about what you're reading, and you're thinking about, what does this have to do with me?

[7 : 52] How does this apply to me, right? If you weren't doing that, you wouldn't read it. This isn't just any book. This is the book of life. This is the book of truth.

This is how God makes himself known to us is through scripture. Scripture puts the church on the same page literally. The problem with being on the same page literally for the number of people in this room right now is each of us bring our baggage to that context, don't we?

We bring our biases and prejudices and ideas. We bring former teachings that may not line up, whatever. That's the same thing that happens in marriage, isn't it?

For those of you who've been married longer than two days, you understand what I'm saying. You get married, and you bring your baggage with you, don't you? And your spouse does. And so two sinners come together in Christ as people who've been born again.

Hopefully, that's what we're looking at. And then those two people have to deal with now not only their own sin, but each and every day the sin of their spouse. We need God to teach us how to live like that with each other according to his design and will.

[9 : 06] It's not just something that just throws together, and we mix it up and hope for the best. People who live like that usually end up divorced. There is a higher and a better way.

So keeping your biases and pride at bay allows the Bible to teach you its message. We want the Bible to teach us what it means by what it says without me reading into it, making it say what I think it ought to say.

Now, I'm telling you all of this, friends, in the way of a reminder, a reminder as we approach the text for today. We've been dealing with these kinds of issues as we've moved through 1 Peter together, the cultural gap, the lingual gap, the gap of understanding the historical context, those kinds of things.

And we need to be careful. Here's what we want to be aware of. We cannot afford to allow our 21st century priorities, ideas of American home life to be read into this passage concerning marriage, wives, husbands, kids, parenting, the whole thing that involves family.

So we dare not define this or any passage of Scripture according to the teachings, the traditions, the values, and the inventions and the philosophies of our world instead of according to Christ.

[10 : 41] You'll find that in Colossians 2, verse 8. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world rather than according to Christ.

That's Paul's concern. He wants these people to know and live out the will of God in their lives, in every area of their lives. Now, I'll tell you, folks, what works against this is our sin.

Again, you do not have an intuitive understanding of God's will and how to live by it. You do not. You need to be taught that. I need to be taught that.

And we can only turn to Scripture to learn that. Scripture shows us Christ. Scripture shows us how to live a life that pleases Christ and glorifies Christ.

This is our calling as Christians. God's will is what matters to us. Now, I'm laying all of this groundwork because as we talk about this together in the way of God's design for family life, it may not sound like and it shouldn't sound like what you hear the world telling you and what you can pick up in the bookstores around here and read about what it means to be married and all that.

[11 : 58] No. God's will ought to sound very different from what the world has to say about this. According, let me just give you the facts, according to our culture's values and views.

So this is what our world would say and think. This is what Suzanne and I have come across our entire ministry life and married life. According to our culture's values and views, wives submitting to and obeying their husbands are outdated concepts.

concepts which actually serve to imprison women in past centuries. That needs to be thrown off and left behind.

They would wish that people like me would stop talking about this and stop talking like this. A wife's biblical, biblical submission and obedience to her husband would only serve to drag women back into the dark ages and forfeit everything that they've gained in the last 40 years of the feminist battle for equality.

This is what our culture says. Following the antiquated, outmoded ways of the Bible is a death sentence for the freedom of any self-determined modern woman.

[13 : 23] Now, I know the people that are sitting in this room that have known me for years and I've known you, you come here because you want to hear God weigh in on what life is supposed to be about.

So this is not a sermon accusing you any more than any other sermon I preach. This is just the will of God. And I'm outlining for you what I know the reality is for you every day of your lives.

Every day of your lives, you go into a work-a-day world that does not uphold what you'll hear this morning from Scripture. It doesn't. In fact, it works against it. The world is the enemy of truth.

That is the reality. We all live in that. Just because I'm a pastor doesn't mean that I'm immune to that kind of thing when I go out into the world every day of my life.

Nobody's standing in line to pat us on the back and congratulate us for following Jesus in our marriage. It's quite the opposite. We can't turn on the television without watching something that flies in the face of God's design for married life and for home life.

[14 : 31] We watched the most ridiculous for how many minutes did I last? I don't even know. The other day, we watched something where the kids, where the kids, kids, Lucy's age and a little bit older, kids, they were the only ones in the show that had a clue what was going on and what life was all about, and every parent and adult in the show were just morons.

They just couldn't get it together. Dad was distant and removed and just an absolute nerd of a guy. Mom was flighty and so full of herself, all she could think about was her hairstyle.

And the kids were the only one that got the problem. And they were going to save the world, you know. But it's show after show after show like that. Where the kids, and I wonder, do you have to be a Christian to sit down to something like that and recognize how inane it is and how it's messing with your head?

You start thinking, and man, so anyway, we didn't last long, you know. What about husbands? How does the world view that? Husbands.

For husbands to willingly lay aside their own interests and sacrificially serve the best interests of their wives is tantamount to signing their own death warrants as men.

[16 : 01] Wives would seize the opportunity. They would walk all over them, taking away their manhood, taking away their man card, and reducing them to a life of serving their wives' whims.

Now, no wife in here is going, that doesn't sound so bad to me. Nobody's doing that, but the world does it. Our modern society's views about kids and parenting reveal similar emphases on individuality, self-expression, me, time, personal rights.

The truth is, our society does not understand the family. They do not understand marriage, and they do not understand the home because they do not recognize the designer and author of those things.

That's why they don't get it. That's why in my life I didn't get it. Before coming to know Christ and treasuring the truth of God's word, I did what I was taught.

I did what was modeled. I did what was in my own heart. Mostly that. I just did what I wanted to do. That doesn't work, and I found that out real quickly.

[17 : 21] Here's the reality. We do not, we do not know as a society how to fix ourselves largely because we don't know how to rightly diagnose ourselves.

Every one of us are tempted to always see the problem outside of ourselves. It takes love for Jesus and the truth of God's word to turn that finger back into our own faces and point it at our own heart.

And that's where the issue resides. In your marriage, in your parenting, it's your heart. You have to listen to this message today regarding your heart.

And it isn't just a heart for your spouse or your kids or what you think home life ought to be. It's your heart for Jesus Christ. Where do you stand in your walk in relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

If you miss him as your Lord and Savior, then you miss the point of life. We don't want that for you, friend. We don't want that for your family.

[18 : 32] I don't want wives to experience that with their husbands or husbands with their wives. Don't miss Jesus. Don't miss Jesus. So whatever you hear today, hear that Jesus Christ is your hope.

Jesus Christ is your salvation. Jesus Christ is your love, your peace. He is, He is your fulfillment in life.

There is no harmony in the home apart from you knowing and walking with the Lord Jesus Christ. Know that first of all. This is what society sees as the reality that they want to live by.

They didn't know how to fix themselves in the time of Paul because they didn't know how to diagnose themselves in the time of Paul. That was true of first century people as they followed man-made ideas about marriage in the home and it's true of us today in our culture.

That hasn't changed. So Paul wrote this passage as God's corrective to these worldly ills that plague the home life of us all and these Christians that he's writing to.

[19 : 48] He taught them God's design for these roles and relationships. They sound very different from what the world says. He effectively redefined family living.

You understand that? In the first century you've heard some of this from Peter's time which was the same time Paul's writing in. These people didn't understand anything about God's will.

Women were basically property. Children were basically slaves that were underfoot and got in the way and you couldn't wait until they grew up and got out of your hair. They were commodities. Men ruled the day.

Many, many times they would lord it over the women and the children and so these authors of scripture write to the people who were being abused. The people who were in the weaker position in society and in doing so the apostle Paul and Peter and others who wrote about family life actually redefined the way people understood God's design for what families are supposed to be.

The only reason they're not in that design is because of personal sin. So they're all being called as individuals to confront that sin in their life that keeps them from following God's way and understanding more of and living out more of heaven's harmony for the home.

[21 : 12] That's where we have to begin friends. Understanding that reality. So Paul's writing to correct this. He wants their roles and relationships to effectively be redefined in God's understanding God's way.

Paul's heart then was to bring marriage and the home into harmony with heaven. Listen to this very carefully as I've said it several times I just want it to be burned into your minds and hearts.

The way to bring family life into harmony with heaven is to bring each member of the family into submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This begins with your marriage not with your kids it begins with your marriage husband and wife. Why?

Because marriage is the nucleus of home life not your kids. okay?

[22 : 22] Your marriage is the nucleus of your home life. I knew that early on. Practicing it's another thing.

And as hard as Suzanne and I worked through the years of raising our children to make sure that our marriage remained the nucleus of home life and not our kids I'll talk more about that in a few minutes.

As hard as that was we I think we were largely successful in keeping that focus and nurturing that reality and then something happened. Something that really turned this whole thing upside down.

I had grandbabies and those grandbabies I was toast. The first one was a girl a blonde toe-headed little girl that looked just like my daughter and the first time she said papa that was it.

It's like she rules she rules whatever the scripture says she rules you know I'm kidding kind of right? I needed a lot of help.

[23 : 35] Suzanne teases me because she tells people the man never says no to her. This is the man who would you know he took care of the discipline in our home raising our kids. My daughter would look at me with her and she'd be like who is this man?

She has him. I said oh no every finger is wrapped. Grandbabies it's look these are blessings from Christ but they're meant to be enjoyed in Christ not by our own invention because we will mess it up.

We will mess it up. All right one more thing let me just get this out and hopefully you'll you'll receive this from your pastor in the love that I mean it.

This is why I'm telling you we've got to be careful not to read these biases into the word of God. One more loving bit of pastoral concern before I turn to the text. I want you to know of my love for the Lord's truth my love for you my desire to see you living lives that are free in the Lord to enjoy the blessings that God brings in the way of family.

So I'm compelled to dispel a particular lie and scheme that Suzanne and I have watched grow in our culture and that has filtered into the church in a fast growing way.

[25 : 04] And I would be remiss if I didn't point it out to you. I think it's something that will actually ruin your marriage. It has the potential to do that.

It can ruin your family at the very least it will distract you and your spouse from living in the full potential of service to Christ and building his kingdom on earth.

And I've already alluded to it. Here's the lie. The lie is that the Christian home revolves around the children. It doesn't.

You cannot support that from scripture. I love my kids with every fiber of my soul. Y'all know that. And I love my grandbabies that way too. But children cannot be allowed to rule the family and run the marriage.

you're asking for big trouble if you follow the culture in that. Love your kids. Raise your kids in the love of Christ.

[26 : 15] Pull them in close. Hold them dear. But don't order your family life around them. You will regret that friends. So I'm telling you up front now especially for y'all who still have kids at home and you're raising them.

So let me say it this way. Children's interests, needs, desires, wants, cannot and must not define how a husband and a wife order their lives and follow Jesus.

and so, you know, while this message is primarily about God's will for husbands and wives, I don't want to be negligent about warning you away from what the world's emphasis is in this on the home and in the marriage that it would be built around children.

You can't go to movies today that you don't see that. You can't watch programming on TV that you don't see that. It's in the literature. It's in the kids' literature.

And I'm telling you, it's a trap. It'll come back to haunt you and to harm you. It'll harm your marriage. It'll harm your kids. It'll harm your family if you're not careful, wise, and faithful in this way.

[27 : 32] All right, so enough. Again, this is not to put down your kids in any way or your love for them, your desire to see them do things and have things.

One of the ways that Suzanne and I handled this was when it was age appropriate, and I think it was a little different for each of our three kids, we were in the habit of talking to them about life, about the issues of living in this world.

And so at one point, we would say to each one of them, what is most important about our family life is, if I was saying it, I would say, is your mom because she's my wife.

And one day, God willing, you will grow up and you will leave our home and you perhaps will find your spouse and you'll establish your home.

And when you do that, do you know who will still be around and be with me when you're gone? Your mom, my wife. She was my wife before she was your mom.

[28 : 44] She'll be my wife when you go off and you become a mom. And that's God's design. We raise you to leave so that you can have a home life and then you become mom and dad.

Mom's most important. Our marriage is most important. And so everything that we do and decide about our home life is decided around our married life.

And they benefit from that. And they need to see it. They need to see that kind of priority between a husband and a wife. So let's listen carefully as we just take a little bit more time to unpack this together.

Alright? So let's ask again. What was the heart of Paul's teaching which redefined, revolutionized, and spiritually energized first century home life?

Well, you find it expressed in several phrases in this passage as we go down from 18 down through 24 or so. Alright? I want to show those to you.

[29 : 53] The question is what is the heart of Paul's teaching? You find it in several phrases in the passage. Look with me at the end of verse 18. Fitting in the Lord. That helps define the heart of what Paul is describing for us.

Fitting in the Lord. Look at the end of verse 20. Well pleasing to the Lord. You see, this isn't well pleasing to the kids. This isn't the concern of being well pleasing to the husband or the wife or the aunt or the uncle or the mother-in-law or the father-in-law.

Right? I could have done that when I was talking to you a minute ago about children not ruling the roost and the marriage and the family life not being built around the kids. I could have put your mother-in-law in that equation and said you can't build your family life around your mom-in-law no matter how wonderful she is or whatever else.

Right? A husband. You don't build your home life around the husband. You build it around Christ. You build it around two people married together in Christ following Jesus together and those two adult people who are learning to walk with God they become the catalyst for showing the kids what walking with God looks like.

What do they know? You're barely keeping up. What chance do they have? You see we need to keep this in the right perspective or we get in trouble quickly because kids will tell you all kinds of things and when those little girls come to their daddies and bat their eyes and ask for ponies it's hard.

[31 : 41] Femi can I get amen? Amen. This man's been away from his family for almost six weeks now. He's chomping at the bit to get back to his... I told him I said brother there's a reason the Bible says it ain't good for a man to be alone.

Right? Amen. So pray for Femi one more week brother. This is it you're on the home stretch alright? And then he gets those kids the wife yes amen.

I've been there and I know it's tough. So go with me well pleasing the Lord into verse 20. Look at the end of verse 22 fearing the Lord verse 23 as for the Lord verse 24 from the Lord you will receive the reward it is the Lord Christ whom you serve you see that?

Fitting in the Lord well pleasing the Lord fearing the Lord as for the Lord on and on these phrases describe and define Christian home life as worship now do you think about your family life like that?

whether you're empty nesters or you're still raising your little ones marriage and family are God's inventions and home life should be about worship you don't you don't not worship all week as a family and then come to church on Sunday and you start worshipping no you're worshipping as a family all week long and you come here and it just bursts out as a family that's one of the reasons that we have a view here at our church we keep families together when we do this I want little Lucy to see other adults in here singing their hearts out to God so she realizes mom and dad aren't the only ones doing this there are other people in the world who love Jesus and sing to Jesus and worship Jesus and order their lives for Jesus because the world doesn't show them that first century Christians needed heaven's spiritual knowledge wisdom and understanding about their God given roles and responsibilities in other words let me put it this way to you wives husbands parents kids and other household workers needed to view the relational dynamics of their home life as expressions of their worship to God now this passage of scripture commands wives and husbands in two expressions of their worship for the Lord Jesus making a marriage in a home life to be in harmony with heaven and what we'll look at is of course wives and husbands wives and husbands the text says very very concisely wives be in submission to be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the

[34 : 39] Lord that's the qualifier husbands love your wives here it comes and do not be embittered against them an embitteredness works against God's design for you to be a husband all right a lack of submission works against wives being in their design role for what God wants in marriage now let's take this apart a little bit together and just look at it because it moves quickly wives my translation says it this way be subject to your husbands be subject to be subject is our word for submission from first Peter for those of you who've been here for the first Peter sermons over the last weeks it's who put so who put so a wonderful little word it means to be in line with or to arrange yourself under so Paul right out of the gate instructs wives to be under the authority of their husbands their husbands of course that's where it starts then he adds this for the wives look as is fitting in the

Lord that's how the text reads exactly as is fitting in the Lord fitting fitting fitting carried the sense of reaching toward trying to attain striving toward that's that's what it originally meant and how it was used originally and then it began to morph and it came to mean meeting your obligation or fulfilling your duty doing in other words what is suitable so when we talk about the role of a wife as God has designed it is suitable for her to submit to her husband so do what is suitable what is fitting and in the Lord ladies in the Lord makes it about worship doesn't it it brings the whole context into worship it tells us how we're to understand and respond to what

God considers our duty or your duty as a wife what is suitable what is appropriate and proper as a foundation for a wife's submission that submission concerns the Lordship of Jesus this is right where Peter had us for a couple of weeks as we talked about a wife's submission in the home now of course of course the world hates this you can completely understand why women who are not in the Lord or women who just profess Jesus but aren't walking with him or in the scriptures why they would chafe at this and not of course this is a terrible affront to us and our rebellious hearts but this is about the Lordship of Jesus and about worship let me get you to turn with me just back a couple of books here to Ephesians where Paul's going to deal with this in such straightforward fashion we looked at this when we were in first Peter talking about this same subject but it's good to go back here and be reminded Ephesians 5 beginning in verse 22 look how Paul says the same thing to the Ephesian church we move now from the church in

Colossae to the church in Ephesus and look what Paul says wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord that's as is fitting in as to the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ notice all these connections 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 in everything that's how it reads submission authority and headship ladies submission authority and headship that combines the role of the wife and the design for the husband it brings them together they are bound up and based in this phrase as in the Lord as in the Lord this this isn't Jeff inventing it for my marriage this isn't Jeff lording it over his wife and and bullying her and intimidating her and manipulating her and controlling her and and it's not her doing that back to me to get each other to fulfill our roles this is godly headship and submission to

Jesus godly submission to me godly submission to the Lord Jesus coming together and working together to complement each other in moving forward in our worship together we're worshiping we're worshiping as a married couple we're bringing honor and exalting Jesus that's what we're seeking to do as is fitting in the Lord that's how our passage says it to the Colossian church as in the Lord is the way he said it to the church in Ephesus so listen wifely submission husbandly headship and the lordship of Jesus Christ over a believer all come together and work together in Christian marriage they they're not at odds a wife submission and a husband's headship and the Lordship of Christ they don't compete they help complete I hope that's making sense to you that would the world have ever thought of this friends how in the world no you you would are you kidding me to tell a wife submit to your husband's authority in everything oh yeah well you don't know my husband I know I get that husbands sacrificially move away from your own interests let your hobbies go to the back put your wife's interests before your own I can hear the husbands now yeah well you don't know my wife walk all over me as if as if those realities cancel God's design and so what do we do we do we do that and we make it up and then we're in bigger trouble now we've really messed it up the world would never ever subscribe to that or invent that and they don't and when they hear it they think those people are nuts well you know what they say the exact same thing about that right there that's nuts that's how

[41 : 56] God wanted to help people deal with the fact that they're separated from him he sacrificed his own son so that they could know him he couldn't come up with a better way than that he had to go allow his son to be tortured to death you know what Paul said about that who are you oh man you don't know who are we to question the potter who forms the clay no we're not we're not this is the wisdom of God folks this is liberation this is freedom you you can try to caveat it to death but this is God's design for Christian marriage so friends fitting in the Lord fitting in the Lord turns this submission into a wife's act of worship and an expression of her obedience to the Lord a wife submission to her husband this is what I'm saying is an act of worship not to him she's not worshipping her husband she's worshipping her God who designed this role for her so it becomes an expression of her obedience to Christ a wife's submission to her husband's spiritual headship is a response to in an expression of her submission to the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in her life and over her husband see your husband submits to he doesn't submit to you he submits to Christ in putting your best interest wife ahead of his own Jesus teaches him to do that that's not natural to men is it it's not natural to me that I would put my own interest behind me and elevate my wife's interest or anybody else's above mine but

Philippians 2 tells us that we're to consider the interests of others more important than our own in following Christ's example who humbled himself even to the point of dying on a cross this is what we're called to and this is the pattern that God gives us to follow now ladies submission assumes authority does it not sure because a wife's submission to her husband is proper in the Lord it is more highly her act of obedience to Christ's authority over her than her husband's authority first and foremost wife your response to your husband's authority is a response to Christ's authority because Christ is the one who tells you to do it one commentator pointed it out this way a Christian wife submission might not appear all that different from that of a non-Christian in the first century in the culture of that day wives were basically property and expected to submit as such but Paul taught that God's way gave much higher meaning and purpose to that submission this higher meaning and purpose are really made clear in what Paul goes on to tell husbands regarding a wife's submission listen to what he says husbands love your wives and do not be embittered against them it's so short and concise and clear very cogent this is God's wisdom for a husband safeguarding and encouraging his wife in her heart of godly submission to Jesus even as she submits to you as her husband I'll say it this way a husband a husband's love for his wife should make it a joy for her to be under his headship it's not always a joy sin sin right sin well what do we do about all of that listen to this again a husband's love for his wife should make it a joy for her to be under his headship how so all right here it is he loves her with the love of Jesus it is a sacrificial love born in his heart of self-denial and expressed in his life as always seeking to act in the terms of what is best for her great goodness what a mandate but that's exactly what Jesus did for us he laid down his life and willingly offered himself for the better interests of his people didn't he and he died to purchase us away from sin what was Jesus primarily concerned about as he went to the cross the glory of his father what are we to be primarily concerned about in our marriage as we serve one another in these design roles the glory of God and then what and then what fulfilling what Jesus fulfilled for us continuing to operate in what Jesus and only Jesus could do for us cleanse us purify us make us clean and holy before the Lord Jesus has accomplished that so what is my greatest concern now as a husband since Jesus has purchased that for my wife what is my primary concern role and goal as a Christian husband regarding my wife what is it her purity her faith walk with God to safeguard and encourage her in her own walk with Jesus Christ

to support her and help her and look out for her best interests that she might lay up treasure in heaven for herself why how do I know that because that's exactly what the Bible says oh really yeah really you doubt me husband husband your submission to Jesus is the foundation and the model for submission in your marriage and family did you hear me husband your submission to Jesus Christ is the foundation and model for submission in your marriage and family you lay gentlemen your sexual desires on the altar of your submission to Jesus Christ but you don't stop there you do what is in your wife's best interest now gentlemen I'm not saying that the wife rules the home any more than I'm saying the parents rule the home I'm saying that you consider God's design for your wife's faith walk with Jesus Christ and you submit to him sacrificing all the distractions that would pull you away from ministering to her in those ways providing for her in those ways safeguarding for her in those ways and you get at it you be a man you submit your ambitions gentlemen your hobbies your career goals your career goals your weaknesses your strengths and all that you are to Jesus you tangibly do this husband here is your heavenly mandate as you follow Jesus in your marriage it's Ephesians 5 25

I'll go back there husbands love your wives again whether it's Peter or Paul or whomever this is what the constant refrain of scripture is for husbands Christian husbands love your wives and it's always this just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her so that he might do what sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word notice that he might present to himself the church that is his bride his wife in all her glory having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she would be holy and blameless you see that just as just as what was the love of Christ concerned with in the life of his bride the church Jesus expressed his love for his bride through a heavenly concern for her sanctification gentlemen her cleansing from sin that is her purity her holiness her fidelity to her groom

Jesus Christ concerned with nourishing her and cherishing her to the glory of God in that relationship that she has with Christ guys I'm going to look you in the eye and ask you this question who else on the face of God's green earth will have that concern for your wife better than you so gentlemen get at it get at it lead your wife in purity and in the worship of Jesus Christ set the tone for trusting the scriptures set the tone for asking for forgiveness and for repenting if I had a dollar bill for all the times I had to ask my kids and my wife to forgive me I could retire right now it's just part of life it's part of following Christ it's part of teaching your family the mercy of Jesus that he is a merciful gracious king he's forgiving and kind he cares

[52 : 16] I would tell my kids I love you but what I love you with doesn't compare to what Jesus loves you with I say that to her Jesus loves you more well they need to know that they need to know that they need to be reminded of that and as imperfectly as daddy loves you the Lord Jesus loves you through me pray for daddy ask Jesus to help daddy love you with the love of Jesus so that you see him clearly and know him see you can say that you can say that to your spouse wives you can say that to your husband honey pray for me pray that I'll submit to you as I submit to Jesus as in the Lord and that I won't chafe at that and that I'll be forgiving and kind and patient with you and your weakness as you lead me what would it do to a church to have marriages that are built like that and people who are loving each other like that

I guarantee you you're doing that in your marriage it's going to be easier still not going to be easy but it's going to be easier for you to come in here and deal with that across the aisle with somebody who offended you or hurt you or slighted you or whatever happened it makes the one another's of scripture come to life when we're seeking to live these things out in our individual lives as families throughout the week it is a way of life and then husband I would say this to you because again I'm reading this text and I'm thinking husbands love your wives and do not be embittered I'm just trying to help you figure that out I'm with you alright look husbands here is what you surrender what your surrender to Jesus looks like on behalf of your wife here it is I hope you'll take this down you worship Christ in a sacrificial commitment to compassionately kindly humbly gently patiently and forgivingly invest in your wife's walk with God that is your calling that is your number one concern your number one concern is not that your wife be happy it's just not you can buy her everything she wants and do all this other stuff no it's about her walk with the Lord why would you do it in that way because that's how

Jesus deals with you husband he forgives you he's kind to you he's compassionate to you all you're doing is taking what Jesus ministers in your life husband and you're turning around and the first person in line to receive the benefit and blessing of your worship and submission to Jesus is whom husband your wife she's first in line she gets the first fruits of the overflow of your surrender to Jesus and from there the two of you it moves down into your kids or see so you you lovingly lead her you lovingly lead your wife husbands to live submissively in the Lord and you do that by your example of submitting your entire life to the lordship and headship of Jesus if your wife was to come to you and say what does what does submission look like honey you you could say to her you're not going to see it done perfectly but watch my life and I will show you what submission looks like because I'm going to show you what submission to Jesus is in my life that's where it starts in marriage is with the husband now pointing at me too she follows your example husband and takes encouragement from seeing your life of submission in action it's not just something you talk about it's something that she sees in action even imperfectly that's okay you don't have a pastor who does it perfectly either so

I'll lock arms with you I'll walk with you if you get into a little bit of a tight spot and you want to know what it might look like for you to repent and make it right ask me and I'll walk with you and I'll talk to you as much as I can about that so husbands your leadership of love leads her by your example of following Christ and his love for his bride you look and see how Jesus loves his bride and you you get in on that it's just not rocket science but it takes the grace of the Holy Spirit to do it doesn't it this isn't something you gut out you put your whole heart into it but you trust God in his grace to lead you in it and to help you let me deal with this one last little phrase and do not be embittered against them husbands do not be embittered against your wife well what was going on in the Christian marriages of the first century that would cause

Paul to have to tell Christian husbands not to do this gee I wonder what the answer is very straightforward isn't it husbands were becoming embittered against their wives so we had to hear this the answer to the question that I'm asking about why would Paul have to tell them this the answer is in the word embittered literally it means to make bitter to make bitter it can refer to a husband becoming hear this gentleman cynical resentful irritated impatient and harsh toward his wife that's what embittered has in mind God's word is giving us the number one reason for the sinful breakdown in spiritual submission and headship in marriage it isn't simply that wives won't submit it's because husbands become embittered that's why and do not become irritated and harsh towards your wife might be a loose translation and it can go both ways

[59 : 09] I know that but it's interesting husbands are given the lead in dealing with this that's because we're given the responsibility of headship so if we lean heavily on the near context and the fuller treatment of scripture on this subject I think we can discern very clearly why this warning is so important I'm almost done now I want you to hang with me look at Colossians 3 verse 13 why is this warning to husbands not to be embittered not to become harsh and patient cynical and resentful toward their wife why is it so important Colossians 3 13 bearing with one another and forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone just as the Lord forgave you so also should you and beyond all these things put on love which is the perfect bond of unity do you want a perfect bond of unity in the church do you want it in your marriage then bear with one another forgive each other and above all things love each other there it is that's why it's so important for husbands not to become embittered toward their wife because an embittered husband works against

God's design for you to be loving kind forgiving just as God has been loving kind and forgiving toward you so you're modeling what God has done in your life it's a look husbands as you love your wife this way it's a way of saying thank you to God thank you God for loving me this way now please Lord help me to love my wife the way you love me help me to do that now help me to turn and minister that to her and your heart remains sensitive in that way forbearing forgiving nourishing cherishing husbands why husbands and wives are sinners saved and forgiven by grace through faith in Jesus Christ husbands please hear me now this is something you know let your pastor say it and put it out there in the open your wife will sin you will have legitimate reasons to lodge complaints against her as she falls short in her role and responsibilities as your wife and as a mother when a husband fails to respond to his wife's sins and shortcomings in loving and Christ honoring ways things break down quickly you become increasingly ungrateful for your wife your irritation with her grows your heart becomes harsh and then you express this in cynical resentful impatient ways towards her and wife you can do the same thing towards your husband as he fails you in his spiritual leadership as he fails you in thoughtfulness as he fails to live up to the design of putting your interests before his own love and it can get to the point in your life where you begin to forfeit acts of kindness toward him because of his overall lack of concern and care for you and so what happens wives can become critical controlling nagging bossy manipulative irritable and harsh and they can do that as a way of life people learn to live with each other like this folks this sinful pattern between husbands and wives a lack of submission on both parties parts to what is fitting in the

Lord people who are living like that have let go of what is fitting in the Lord and so pleasing Jesus has ceased to be the priority in their marriage and so it doesn't look like love it doesn't look like submission it doesn't look like patience forgiveness kindness gentleness it doesn't look like two people bearing with each other and the root cause is the same for both husbands and wives they've ceased seeing their relationship as an expression of love and worship for the Lord Jesus two sinners patiently forgiving each other as you follow the Lord together that's the basis for a home in harmony with heaven so when the question comes what exactly am I supposed to submit to my husband in the wife might ask that I've had that get specific

Jeff what exactly am I supposed to submit to him in well you never submit to your husband if he is requiring you to sin you can't say yes to your husband and no to Jesus that's not your husband safeguarding your walk with the Lord so you have to say no then but you can do it with great gentleness and deference to the Lord right you don't have to be naggy and all that kind of thing but what do you submit to my answer is this does it matter if he's not asking you to sin does it matter not really if you and your husband are fully committed to worshiping Jesus together in your marriage then you'll gladly you'll willingly submit to your husband as he leads you in love even if even if and as he does it imperfectly you're you're not wife you're not blown out of the water when your husband leads you imperfectly because you see the pattern of his life is to repent and follow

Jesus you know that this is what characterizes your husband more than anything else in his life this man loves Jesus and wants to follow Christ it just makes it now some of you ladies aren't married to Christian husbands some of you aren't married I understand that what can you do you can pray for each other can't you we can pray for each other that we will know this together and have this together we have wives in our congregation with unsaved husbands will you pray for those husbands do you know their names and will you pray for them see right it starts there in in Greek the word submit is in the middle voice meaning a wife's submission is to be voluntary it's to be something you willingly do not that you feel coerced into a wife's submission is willing in that it is hear this it is her gift of worship back to

[66 : 48] Christ have you ladies have you ever looked at your submission to your husband as a way that you offer the gift of worship back to God it's not bullied it's not intimidated out of her by her husband it's not begrudgingly given by her while she harbors her own irritations and impatience toward her husband no and then this and then I'll share a couple scriptures a husband's love for his wife is agape the sacrificial love Jesus showed in giving himself up for his bride that notice gentlemen that he might present to himself the church his bride in all her glory having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she would be holy and blameless so here here is what we are set on as husband and wife here it is as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord husband and wife so walk in him together being firmly rooted and now together being built up in him and now together being established in your faith just as you were instructed together in scripture and together the two of you overflowing with gratitude together that's the difference

Jesus has made in both of you and you are privileged to live out that difference you are privileged to express Jesus in your marriage through your words and your ways that's a privilege that's a sweet gift and then this you have obtained and you seek to grow in a spiritual knowledge spiritual wisdom spiritual understanding that's what your kids need to see that's what your unsaved friends need to see about your marriage your church family needs to see that that you have a sober minded spiritual outlook about your marriage and your life and your home life so that why would I have all that concern Jeff why would that be my focus spiritually so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord fitting in the Lord as to the Lord husbands love your wife as Christ loves so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please him in all respects bearing fruit in every good work together increasing in the knowledge of God together strengthened in your marriage with all power according to the glorious might of the Lord attaining to all the steadfastness and patience together in your marriage joyously giving thanks together in your marriage to the Father because you know that the Father has qualified the two of you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light as fellow heirs of the grace of life that's what

Peter says so you learn together as a couple to treasure that God has made you fellow heirs of the grace of life and you live out that treasure together you safeguard it and move in it together and it is a beautiful thing to behold is it perfect no but even your stumbles become beautiful as people see you return to the throne of grace gain forgiveness in the Lord and move forward you see friends it's a win-win it's a win-win be encouraged God would never call us to this if by grace through faith he didn't give us what we needed to be able to live it out live it out enjoy your spouse enjoy your home in the Lord let's pray together Father thank you for the truth of scripture that teaches us to honor and to safeguard the treasures of family life of children the blessing and gift that children are to us the blessing and gift and treasure that our spouse is to us is a gift from heaven thank you God we ask you to forgive us now

I know that as I studied this and looked through it and prayed through it my fellow brothers and sisters are probably feeling very similar to what I felt Lord just the need to confess certain things and repent I pray that you would keep them from feeling overwhelmed in the weakness they feel as wives and husbands and in their marriage that you would use those awarenesses to bring them to yourself and to find mercy and kindness forgiveness gentleness and love in you you're showing this to them in scripture today so that they can repent and so that they can know more of the fullness of your love and kindness to them as they are married according to your design as husbands and wives work together to order their home in ways that please you in all respects so I pray for my brothers and sisters I pray that you will make the marriages of our church strong in their faith in the Lord

Jesus I pray that husbands will be courageous lovers of Christ I pray that wives will be courageous submitters to their husbands as their husbands follow Jesus and again in all the imperfections that they will experience in that walk I pray that they will know the forgiveness and tenderness and mercy of your heart toward them and that nothing will serve to discourage them or distract them away from what you've called us to be in Christ Jesus he is our hope he is our life he is our love he is all to us because he is our treasure we thank you for Jesus father and we thank you for the word of God which is our truth for life help us to live it and speak it in love in Jesus precious name amen thank you for your kind attention