

1 Peter 3
Solving Marriage Problems
J.D. Farag

Okay, *1 Peter Chapter 3* today,

[Audience shouts “Woo”]

the first seven verses. Well, what you're saying that now. We'll see if you still feel the same way after.

But listen, for those of you that are here, if you're able, I'll ask you to stand; you can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is fine.

The apostle Peter now is, by the Holy Spirit, going to continue. And he says, *verse 1, “Wives.”*

[Audience comments]

[Laughter]

Wow, I could tell what kind of – we're off to a great start. **“In the same way be submissive to your husbands. [That's what I thought] So that if any of them do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.**

Your beauty, [Verse 3] should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.

[Quick, take the bling off]

[Verse 4] It should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

For this is the way [Verse 5] the Holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands [Not other husbands, their own husbands] like Sarah [Verse 6] who obeyed Abraham and called him her master.”

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Some of your translations say, "called him Lord."

Okay, I'll just leave that one right there.

"You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands [Your turn] in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives [Some of your translations render it "dwell with them in understanding"] and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

Let's pray. We need to pray. If you would, please join with me.

Father in heaven, thank You so much for Your Word. Thank you that Your Word is alive and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and that it's able to surgically, perfectly cut between soul and spirit, bone and marrow, and remove that which can be serious and dangerous to us in our lives, and especially in the context of our married lives, Lord.

Lord, we desperately need for You, by the Holy Spirit, with this particular passage to give us eyes of understanding. Lord, I would pray very specifically that the enemy would not in any way keep us away or distract us away from what it is that You have to say here in Your Word.

Lord, we don't want our minds to wander. We want to give you our undivided attention as You speak into our lives concerning the matter of marriage. So, Lord, we ask You for this in Jesus name, amen and amen.

You can be seated. Thank you. So what I want to do today is take and tackle the tough topic of marriage specifically as it relates to solving problems and conflicts between husbands and wives.

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Now, by way of introduction, I just want to let you know that as the pastor, you know, my wife and I have been married for 34 years, and we have a perfect marriage, and we have perfect children. So this isn't for me. This is for you. I just wanted to get that out of the way.

[Laughter]

I'm just kidding, by the way.

Can you believe what the pastor said?

Nah, anyway.

Now, what we have here is the Apostle Peter, by the Holy Spirit, addressing Christians who, in the context of this letter, are suffering greatly. They're suffering extreme persecution.

And the Apostle Peter has just addressed this matter of submitting to the authorities. And those who were slaves at that time, of which there were many, he had to address that as well because God has this ordained authority structure.

I just want to add some context here because arguably, we're going to, right out of the chute, deal with a very controversial passage of scripture. We're going to try to work through it.

There is great misunderstanding concerning it, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, I think we can see what it is that the Lord has for us today. Because as Peter then, by the Holy Spirit was writing, it was to encourage them, and they needed encouragement.

And for us today, especially when it comes to the marriage relationship, we need encouragement, and we need practical answers to those problems in the

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marriage. And thankfully, God's Word is never lacking when it comes to those answers and practical answers.

So I found eight, eight answers, eight solutions, if you prefer, to many of the problems within a marriage relationship.

And I want you to hear what I'm going to say because I'm saying it in a particular way. All of these solutions, all of these answers to marital conflict problems within the marriage relationship, they are attainable vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me say the same thing again in a different way, and then we'll see this more and I'll expound on it. But by way of the Holy Spirit, you can have a great marriage.

I'm going to flip it around. Absent the Holy Spirit, you have no hope of having a great marriage. So have a nice day.

[Laughter]

So marriage can either be heaven on earth, or it could be hell on earth. It need not be the latter. Marriage can be wonderful, and a great marriage can be attainable by way of the Holy Spirit. That is the only way, and we're going to see that.

So you ready? Let's start.

First one, first part of *verse 1*. You want to solve the problems in the marriage?

“Wives, submit to your husbands.”

Now I realize this is a very touchy topic, and it is sad because it has been greatly misunderstood. And I will even venture to say that many a pastor has taught

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this - well, maybe I should say it this way - has not taught this correctly, not divided the Word correctly, rightly. And here's why.

The submitting of the wife to the husband is actually for the benefit of the wife. This is the reason for the context. It's the ordained authority structure that God has ordained in the marriage relationship.

And the husband - the onus is on the husband - that's going to - we're going to see this throughout, but he's the covering of the wife as the head of the wife.

So whenever we read in scriptures, in the scriptures, **“wives submit to your husbands,”** it's really more on the husbands. Be the husband that your wife can submit to.

Wow, did you see how I did that? That was pretty good, wasn't it? I've been working on it all week.

[Laughter]

That's rightly dividing the Word. This is the God-given authority structure ordained by God that the husband will be the leader, the spiritual leader, and covering over the wife.

Now I should hasten to say that this in no way means a wife should ever submit to a husband that's abusive. But the wife is under the authority of her husband, her own husband, as the head, as the covering, and the wife is to submit to her husband.

And this ties in with the second one, not nag her husband.

Uh-oh, no, no, you didn't.

Oh, yes, I did.

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Because Peter did. Here, Peter is addressing the matter of a believing wife who has either an unbelieving or spiritually immature or backslid husband, and apparently, she's badgering him, hounding him, pushing him constantly, nagging him, you know, putting scriptures in his sack lunch.

Of course, we don't do that anymore. The wife just texts him the Bible verses, you know, and badgers him.

Well, there's a problem with that because it can have the opposite effect. You, in effect, create the very thing you're trying to avoid.

No, instead, don't use your words, use your actions. That's how you're going to win him over. That's the desired effect.

And it's the opposite effect that thankfully and conversely, not doing this can have the desired effect on the husband. See what happens - wives, you got to know we just don't get it, okay? I just - guys, be nice to me on this, okay?

But let's be honest with ourselves. We don't get it. When our wife is hounding us and nagging us, it's like the Proverb says, **“It's that constant dripping of a contentious wife.”** And what do we do? We take our bread crumbs, we go eat on the roof and leave the prime rib on the table. That's in the Proverbs. Don't look at me like that.

Wives, listen, please understand, we don't get it. And so when you try to, you know, keep nagging and, you know, hounding us, it just makes it worse.

In fact, that's what we do. We give you that look like, you know, when a dog is confused? It just - because we don't hear what you're saying. We just hear tones and pitches and keys and volume (High-pitched whiny sound) and then

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we're just looking at you like, you know, what language is that? Are you are you speaking in tongues because...

And this, by the way, is a principle that you don't break. It breaks you, and it's across the board on every level, in every arena of life. It's that teacher with the student that is anti-Christian. And the more you try to debate and argue and hound and badger, it has the opposite effect.

No, pull back. Pull back. Let them watch your life. And that's the third one in *verse 2*.

Let, wives, your husbands see your beauty in your purity and in your holiness. In other words, you want to win him over? Win him over by virtue of your walk matching your talk because they're not going to get away from that.

It's - this is a tough one because it's misunderstood at best and dismissed at worst in the sense that, again, husbands just dig their heels in when the wife is just hounding them and nagging them.

But just try this, wife. Don't say anything. Don't say anything. Now you've got their attention. They're like, why did you stop nagging me? Now they're concerned. Wait a minute, what's going on here?

Oh, that's...

It needs to be the Holy Spirit that they see. Let me say that again. They need to see the Holy Spirit in you. They don't need to have you keep nagging them. They need for you to live it out, and then that's how you're going to win him over. And this is the example that we get in *verses 3 and 4*.

(Deep sigh)

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I won't spend too much time here, wives, so... But the emphasis is on the inward, not the outward. It's the inward beauty. And this exhortation; I don't know if it's possible to overstate the paramount importance of it but think about this.

Isn't this true that – and it goes for both men and women, by the way - that what we don't have on the inside we'll try to overcompensate for on the outside? You know how it is when you meet people, and outwardly they're very attractive until they talk. Oh, my goodness!

I think I have my wife's permission on this one, but it reminds me of that story. The husband says to the wife, “How can something so stupid come out of someone so beautiful?” To which the wife responds, “Well, honey, God made me beautiful so you would marry me, and He made me stupid so I would marry you.”

[Laughter]

Okay, just had to lighten it up a little bit.

[Laughter]

What is Peter saying here? I mean, he's talking about, you know, don't adorn yourself with your hair and makeup and jewelry and your outward appearance. Let not that be your beauty. Let your beauty be inward.

Well, wait a minute; we have a problem here, Pastor. There's a whole industry based on this. And before I start taking my makeup off and my jewelry off, is Peter saying that the women shouldn't do that?

Absolutely not. Boy, that didn't come out very nice, did it? Please don't take it off, but just don't -

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[Laughter]

I'm digging myself into a deeper hole here. Just a minute. Help me, Lord, please. You said You would.

[Laughter]

Okay, let's try to bring this back in here.

Where's the emphasis? Where's the emphasis? Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. I mean, you know, some people can be so beautiful on the outside and so ugly on the inside.

That's what Peter is talking about. It's the inward beauty. And, you know, it's interesting - I think about this often. This is not saying anything against being beautiful or wearing makeup, or doing your hair and wearing jewelry, and wearing nice clothes, but what it does have to do with is if that's the outward adornment, let it match what's on the inside.

Because I tell you - and this is for young people - you know when you first get married, even the way you talk to each other is - it's just - it's disgusting, actually.

I mean, sweetie pie, cupcake, you know, sugar cookie, whatever, pumpkin, whatever you use. Well, let me get the door for you, you know? Oh, you're so adorable.

And look at you guys. You're so young, and the guys still have hair, and there's no wrinkles, and you look at those old pictures, you just think, oh, Jesus, come quickly!

It's going to fade. It's not going to last because your married life is going to hit life, and life is going to hit your married life. And when it does, the outward

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beauty means nothing. It's the inward character, it's the inward. That's what really matters. The outward beauty is fleeting. It's meaningless, it's inconsequential, it's nebulous. It's the inward character; that's the beauty.

Wives, this is directed at the wives. If you want, we can bow our heads and close our eyes. You can leave now, but it gets worse in just a minute.

This is the next one, the fifth one, *versus 5 and 6*. And it's a biggie. You want to solve problems in the marriage? Wife, quit usurping your husband's authority.

You know, when I was a new believer - you know when the sin entered the world and God curses the child labor and the woman, and then says to her, **“And your desire will be for your husband.”**

Now, at first read, I'm like, cool, my wife's going to desire me. That's not what it is. Your wife will desire to usurp your authority and your headship. And that is going to be the source of many problems in your marriage.

Now, how do I get there? Oh, Peter brings up Sarah. Remember her? Oh, she submitted to Abraham, yeah. She could have - she didn't, to her credit, which is why Peter, by the Holy Spirit, is using her as an example.

When her husband says, Honey, I want you to lie, say that you're my sister, it's kind of a half-lie, which is a half-truth, which is a whole lie, by the way.

Because technically, I guess genealogically, genetically, she could have been, you know, in terms of the lineage, his sister, but she was his wife. But she was very beautiful.

And here they are, and he doesn't want her to be taken, you know, into the harem. So he says, tell them that you're not my wife, you're actually my sister.

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Now, she could have said, huh-uh, but she doesn't. She submits to his authority as her husband and does it under this banner. She knows God's going to deal with him.

Now, stay with me, wives. Don't usurp your husband's authority.

Yeah, but they're going - this is a bad decision.

I know. Let him make it. God will take care of him. And by the way, He'll do a much better job. Let him. Oh, God's going to...

Yeah, but... okay, so I'm going to. You're the authority.

Again, not if it's an abusive thing. Please don't. So your husband, wife, is going to make this decision, and you don't feel a peace about it.

By the way, husbands, when your wife says to you, I don't feel a peace about it, listen! That's the Lord. She's your help me. She has discernment and intuition that God has given to her to help you.

And by the way, guys, we need all the help we can get. What do we do when they say, well, I just don't feel a peace about it? (High-pitched whiny sound)

[Laughter]

Okay, yeah, it's not like that but. So what do we do? Because we want - we want a print out. Okay, I want to see - okay, explain to me- bullet point - why do you think this is not a good decision? Because I've done the pros and cons, the pluses and minuses. I've thought this thing through. Logically, this makes sense.

I just don't know. I just don't feel a peace about it.

Well, you don't feel a peace? Well, we're going to do it.

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Okay, I'm not going to usurp your authority.

Oh, boy, can I go somewhere when God deals with you on this? Because that's exactly what God did with Abraham. And it wasn't pretty.

What's the point?

Wives, understand your husband is under the highest authority. You're under his authority, under his covering, but he has to answer to God because God is over him, his authority.

Yeah, but, man, if he does this, it's going to - it's going to be bad.

Oh, my goodness, if I could go back over the years and all those times, especially the financial decisions where my wife said, "I didn't feel a peace about it," man, if I could just have that money back, it'd be great. She was right. I hate it when the wife is always right.

[Laughter]

Because, you know, husbands get real proud and kind of like, you know, because we have egos. Come on. But the onus is still on you, husband.

Oh, yeah, your wife will submit to your authority, not usurp your authority, but that's even worse for you because now it's all on you, and you are under authority. Let me see if I can - because this is a very important principle when it comes to solving problems in the marriage.

Wives, just back up, don't nag them. Pray for them, and pray that God be merciful to them, but give them over to the Lord. Like the Lord doesn't know? Just let the Lord take care of it. He did that with Abraham.

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And by the way, God honored Sarah for her decision. Yeah, her husband Abraham was wrong, but she was right, and God honored her and blessed her for that. And He disciplined Abraham for that.

Don't try to help the Holy Spirit out with your husband. You're just going to make it worse for yourself too, by the way, because the wife was never intended by God to carry that. That's on the husband, the sole responsibility.

You know husband's like, well, I'm the spiritual leader in my home.

Okay, act like it then.

Well, I'm the head of my house.

Okay, but your wife's the neck.

[Laughter]

We're going to get there. I'm going to try to save some time for the husbands.

Well, look at the time: When we get to the husbands, I'm sorry.

[Laughter]

No, we will just -hey, by the way, no elbowing either.

[Laughter]

Husbands, you better not because we're going to get it here in a moment.

Number 6, that moment is now, first part of *verse 7*. You want to solve problems in the marriage, husbands? Be understanding of your wives.

Oh, Pastor with all due respect, I don't understand my wife. I will never understand her.

I can understand. That's not what it says. It doesn't say understand her. It says be understanding of her. Considerate, consider her feelings, be understanding.

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Now, lest one think that only having one verse for the husbands compared to six verses for the wives.

(Chuckling)

I know husbands always love the Ephesians, which by the way, we're going to do *Ephesians 5*. You're not leaving until we do, so you can't go. We have people out in the parking lot to make sure you can't leave.

Because it's the other way around. But the wives don't like *1 Peter* because, you know, it's six verses about wife, wife, wife, wife, and then one verse, husband.

You see that, honey, it's only one verse about me.

Oh, but is it a doozy!

Be understanding, be considerate, dwell with them in understanding.

Again, first and foremost, the onus is on the husband to solve the marital problems because again, we want to be the spiritual leaders when it comes to "submit, woman!"

But how about being the spiritual leader and lead the way in solving the conflict? What is it about us? Well, I know what it is about us. It's our sin nature, husbands, our adamic nature that it's always the wife's fault. We always put it on her.

Oh, am I the spiritual leader now? No wonder the wife has to usurp the husband's authority. He's abdicated it.

Wait, I thought you were the spiritual leader? Shouldn't you also take the lead when it comes to this? How come you only want to take the lead in all the

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other areas, but we got a problem, you don't want to take the lead. You're putting it on me. It's not on me; it's on you, buckaroo.

By the way, buckaroo is not a bad word; I looked it up.

I suppose that you could fairly and rightly say that this is one of the main problems, if not the main problem, when it comes to marital conflict.

What do you mean?

A husband who is not being understanding and considerate of his wife's feelings - yes, I use that word because that's how God made our wives, guys.

They are emotional. (

Exasperated sigh)

This is why I have notes, and this is why I should stick with notes. Boy, is this – ah - I'm not doing very good, am I? They're emotional. Men are logical.

Women are wired this way if I can say it like that.

Here's the best illustration I've ever heard, bar none. Over here, you got a buffalo. You know what I'm talking about? A buffalo – big (Growling)

And over here you have a butterfly.

[Laughter]

You know where I'm going with this? right? Okay, take a pebble, small, little pebble. Put it on the back of the buffalo who doesn't even know it's there, rolls off its back.

Take that same pebble, put it on the wing of the butterfly, you kill it.

Okay, see what I told you? That's the best illustration. That's your wife! She's the butterfly!

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Here we are so insensitive and inconsiderate, and unloving and uncaring, and we have no understanding at all. It's kind of like, what's the matter with you?

I've got a boulder on my wing!

[Laughter]

It's not a boulder; it's a pebble.

No, it's a boulder to me; it's a pebble to you.

Oh, that worked, didn't it? (Chuckling) We can close in prayer right there, yeah! Oh, man! I'm telling you guys; I got the scars to prove it. I own this.

[Laughter]

Oh, early on in our marriage, I was such a jerk, so spiritually full of myself and my pride and... Okay, that's all I'm going to say about that for now.

Number 7, second part of *verse 7*. Husbands will honor and value their wives. You want to solve the problems in your marriage, husbands? Start honoring your wife and valuing your wife.

You know, a lot of those problems in your marriage is because you depreciate her, you devalue her, you see her as being inferior. She's not inferior. She's a joint heir with you. How about that? She's equal with you.

Well, yeah, but what about Peter saying she's the weaker vessel?

Oh, so weaker's synonymous with inferior now? No, physiologically, physically, unless, of course, you do things, and enter a swimming competition, but that's another story for another time.

[Laughter]

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Sorry, that was bad. But I should tell you something right there, shouldn't it, when you see that stuff? I mean, I know it's just horrific and a sign of the times, but it's real. But you can't do that. You might outwardly change, but inwardly you will never change. Anyway, that's another sermon for time.

But they're - physically and emotionally they're the weaker vessel, not inferior. They're more delicate, like the butterfly.

Here we are big buffaloes (Growling) You know, it's a guy thing, right? And we're just crushing our wives, these little butterflies. They're so delicate, and we devalue them. And is that not - I want you to think about this.

Is that not the reason why the husband will be condescending to the wife? He devalues her. Why would a husband be so inconsiderate, even mean, not be understanding to his wife, not honor his wife? Is it not because he doesn't value her?

You know, a lot of times - bear with me - we deal with symptoms, but not the problem.

Okay, illustration. You take a pain reliever when you start getting a headache. It might relieve the symptoms temporarily. In fact, by the way, that's what it says: Temporary relief.

How about permanent relief? Temporary? I need permanent.

No, temporary relief.

That's what we do. We just deal with the symptoms. We've never dealt with the core problem that's causing the symptoms. What's the core problem?

Well, apparently there's something more serious going on here that's causing

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the headaches and the problems in your marriage. And it's how you see your wife.

Do you see them this way? They're co, they're equal, they're joint heirs in Christ alongside of you.

I love that quip about how that when God made Eve, He took a rib from his side to be next to him, not from his head to be over him, or from his feet to be under him. No, from his - where his heart is to be next to him.

I want to take this just one step further and suggest husbands [Husbands] that it very well could be that this is the reason for the conflict and the problems and the headaches in your marriage, how you see your wife.

You don't honor her; you don't value her. When's last time you bought her flowers?

Oh, wow, well, I bought her a vacuum cleaner.

[Laughter]

That's the problem! What is she, your maid? You've demoted her. Oh, she's no longer a joint heir with you. Now she's your housekeeper. Buy her a vacuum cleaner? Don't do that, by the way. Whatever you do, don't buy your wife a vacuum cleaner for your anniversary. That's like the ultimate. Unless she wants one for you to use, then buy one.

[Laughter]

Oh, thank you, honey, so much. Start vacuuming! Happy anniversary!

Again, I know I'm trying to – I can't. I just love to laugh, but this is actually pretty serious. I'll try to be more serious. I can't, but I'll try.

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Guys, seriously, if you peel back all the layers of your marital conflict, it might just come to this. And there's - and by the way, your wife knows it. You don't even have to say anything. They're going to smell it on you.

You don't value me. I'm not the most important person in your life next to the Lord.

Hey, husbands, when your wife knows [Knows] that she's the most important person in your life next to the Lord, oh, man, you could buy as many vacuum cleaners as you want.

But no, she's competing with your friends. Golfing, fishing's more important.

How am I doing? I can keep going. You fill in the blanks.

You know what you're saying to your wife, right? Honey, I love you. I told you that day we got married. It still stands.

No, it doesn't work that way. Nice try. I love you, but I'm going to go hang out with the boys tonight.

Oh, okay. I guess the boys are more important than me because if I was really more important to you and that important to you, what I would hear you say instead is, hey, yeah, you know, brother just called me, and they're going to get together and, you know, go fishing. And I told him, no, I want to be with my baby.

[Laughter]

Hey, try that. Watch what happens!

And guys, thank God it doesn't take much, by the way. Thank God it doesn't.

Could you imagine? I mean, just a little thing like saying to your wife - I'm getting very convicted right now - hey, honey, this is our time. And I just, you

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know, no email – this is what I mean about getting convicted - no work, no phone. Put your phone away. That thing's tracking you anyway; just put it away, turn it off.

Let's talk.

And then listen. Let her talk. And bite your tongue. You'll have to bite your tongue. You might be surprised to find out what's in her heart that she's not been able to share with you.

And here's the thing, guys, and I want to be very candid with you when I say this. If you won't listen to your wife, you set her up for the enemy to find somebody who will. You realize that?

I mean, it doesn't - you need look no further than to the statistics concerning divorce, which sadly are no different in the Christian world than in the world.

You need look no further than to well, he was very understanding, and he would listen to me, and I was important to him. And you set them up. You set them up.

And it goes both ways too, and I don't want to belabor it, but it goes both ways for the wife to the husband as well.

But husbands, it could very well be that the main problem in your marriage is because you don't value your wife. You need to show her that she's the most important person in your life.

Now, how you do that, that's going to depend. It may very well be a thing of, hey, you know, I cleared my calendar. This is our time, babe. And take her to her favorite place to eat and buy her flowers. And then on the way home, you can pick up the vacuum cleaner, I guess.

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[Laughter]

I don't know.

Last one, number 8. You want to solve the problems in your marriage, husbands? Love your wives and pray for your wives. What?

Okay, now *verse 7*, I mean - well, let me let me say it this way. Do you wonder why your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling, husband? It's because of this.

So it's almost like I could picture God in heaven saying, don't even bother. You go make it right with your wife, then you come and talk to Me. I'm not going to listen to you. You need to go listen to your wife. Your prayers are hindered.

So here's what we do, guys; I'm going to put this on the guys. I will come back to the wives before we close, don't worry, *Ephesians 5*. But I'm going to put this on the guys.

Guys, this is what we do, right, because we're so proud and our big, macho egos, right? So there's a conflict. Silent treatment. And you'll go days, and you're fuming inside. You let the sun go down on your anger, and the devil gets a foothold into your marriage and wreaks havoc.

And by the way, you don't have to resolve it before you go to bed, but just don't let the sun go down in your anger. At least agree to disagree until you can early in the morning rise up when **“His mercies are new every morning”** and revisit the problem.

By the way, sometimes you'll wake up in the morning, and go what did we argue about last night? Amazing!

But resolve to - in fact, my wife and I many years ago made a decision that we would not discuss weighty matters. I mean, if at all possible, in as much as we

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were able, we would not discuss weighty matters at night when we're tired because it always - it doesn't end well. It never does.

So we just decided that, hey, we're going to - fresh in the morning, we'll revisit this and tackle this issue.

Reminds me of a story about the husband boasting that, yeah, we never go to bed angry. I mean, sometimes it's 2:00 in the morning, but sure enough, my wife will come crawling to me on her hands and knees and say to me, "Come out from underneath the bed and fight like a man, you coward!"

[Laughter]

Okay, just the point is, don't let the sun go down on your anger. I could have done it better, maybe even faster. So here's what we do. We go to bed fuming. And when you wake up in the morning, it's worse. It's worse.

And pray for them? Oh, I'll pray for my wife, all right. God, show her that she's wrong.

Oh, come on!

Show her it's her fault. Because she did that. By the way, guys, spoiler alert, your wife is praying the same thing. Lord, show my husband...]

And you're both at a standstill. It's a stalemate. It's a standoff. And you'll go days again like that.

Oh, that's horrible. Don't do that. Don't do that.

Husbands, it's on you. It's on us, husbands. You know, the Proverbs say that there are seven things that the Earth cannot stand up under, and there's a list of those things. It's quite an interesting read.

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But one of those things that is just too high for the understanding, that the Earth cannot stand up under, is a wife who is not loved, an unloved wife. It rises to the level, a wife who is not loved.

Husbands, love your wives, pray for your wives. You don't think they're being attacked? It could be that they're being attacked more than you as the husband, especially in this world we're living in right now.

Instead, we get angry.

And wives, listen, you do the same thing. In fact, you're probably in some ways better at this than we are because you let that seething anger just kind of turn into a little bit of bitterness. And it's a root of bitterness, and it begins to germinate and sprout, and it turns into full-on resentment. That was a little bit strong, but am I right?

Boy, I tell you, don't - you let bitterness grow? It'll eat your lunch, man. It'll destroy your marriage. It'll destroy your marriage. Don't become bitter.

Ephesians 5. We're almost done. This is that very well-known passage of scripture. It's kind of the go-to; you know it well. I want to begin reading in *verse 21* though, not *verse 22*; you'll see why.

The apostle Paul writing to the church in Ephesus says *verse 21, Chapter 5*,
“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Now you see why husbands always start at *verse 22* because *22* echoes *1 Peter Chapter 3, verse 1*, **“Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”**

See, husbands don't - in fact, I hope - wife, if you can get your husband's Bible, make sure that he has *verse 21* still in there, if he's not like blacked it out and

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highlighted *verse 22*, underlined red. He's even got a red line under *verse 22*. But I know this is deeply profound.

Verse 21 comes before *verse 22*. And by the way, *verse 8, 1 Peter, Chapter 3*, you can read it. **“Submit one to another and live in harmony out of reverence for the Lord.”**

So the next time, husbands, you get that manly buffalo urge to tell your wife, “Woman, submit to me.” It’s to each other; it’s to each other.

Husbands, let me ask you a question just real quick, and then we'll finish. But what would your wife do if you instead of doing what you always do, and by the way, those are two words you should never use in any marital conflict.

Now, of course, pastors, we don't, you know, call them “arguments” as a husband, wife, we call them “intense fellowship.”

[Intense fellowship]

But when you're having intense fellowship as husband and wife, don't use these two words ever. The two words are “always” and “never.”

You always blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!

You never blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!

It won't work; I promise you it won't work. Remove those two words from any discussion in your marriage.

Husbands, back to you. What would your wife do if instead of doing what you always do, you said to her, you know what, honey, you're right.

You know what they're probably going to do? Who are you? What did you do with my husband? Where did you come from. Oh, what do you want? What

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do you want? You know, it's bad when you come home with flowers, and your wife goes, "What did you do?" Because you never bring me flowers.

It should never be like that, right? But what would your wife do if instead of doing what you always do, you instead just said, hey, honey, and you just listened?

And she's going to lay into you. Let her. And you're going to bite your tongue. Do it.

You never know. Because you have to know that she has your best interests at heart because she's got a vested interest in this relationship, right?

So she's going to tell you and speak to you the truth in love because she loves you. If she didn't love you, she wouldn't bother. It's like, you know, when your wife says to you, "You need to start eating healthier," that's a good thing.

Don't get angry at her. I can't have any more - (Chuckling) just thinking about all the food I can't eat any more.

But you know what? How about if she came to you and said, "No, honey, I want you to eat this lard and this grease, and I want those arteries to get really hard, and how much was that life insurance policy again?"

[Laughter]

Now you should probably be concerned.

But no, she's concerned. She's telling you - I'm getting very conflicted right now - I love you; I want you around. I want you to, you know, I don't want you to die.

If you die, I'll kill you, my way.

Like, wait a minute. Anyway...

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So she loves me, she wants me to be alive. That's a good thing. So listen to her. Don't shut her down. Don't crush her. That's what you always do. You always do that. You know, what'll happen is she'll close up, and then you're really in trouble because she won't say anything out of fear of how you're going to react to her and that you're going to get angry with her.

And trust me, guys, you want your wife talking to you, even if it's tough to hear. You want her talking with you because believe it or not, she's actually telling you where the goalposts are.

And guys, we need to know where the goalposts are because we're going, "Where are the goalposts here? You're what? What did I say? What did I? Why are you so hurt?"

"Because you bought me a vacuum cleaner for our anniversary, that's why!"

[Laughter]

She's going to tell you where the goalposts are. That hurts me; don't do that again.

Oh, I didn't know that was going to - if I'd have known it was going to hurt you like that, I wouldn't have done it, honey, sweet sweetie pie, cupcake. Here, let me open the door for you.

Do you realize that it could just change the whole complexion of your marriage like that?

And then, okay, let's get this over with. First *verse 22*, **"Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord for the husband [Here it is] is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior."**

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Did you catch that - ordained authority structure and covering? Now, by the way, in Ephesians, when we were verse-by-verse study of Ephesians, I think I did a series titled 'What Submission Really Means.' I think you can find it on YouTube and then on our website.

Now *verse 24*, **“As the church [*Listen to this*] submits to Christ so also wives should submit to their husbands and everything.”**

Okay, you see that connection, that authority structure? Now, husbands; wives, just relax. This is for husbands.

“Love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

In the same way [*Verse 28*], husbands [*What about the wife?*] [*Just – we’re still with the husbands*] husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one is ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church — for we are members of His body.

“For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united [*Or cleave*] to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery— but I am talking about Christ and the church.

However [*Verse 33*] [*This, by the way, is the third time, husbands*] each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

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What? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven words for the wife. Three times **“Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”**

Husbands, love your wives as you already love your own body, and care for it and nurture it, and comb it and shave it, and all the other things that you do to it. And then love your wives as you already love yourself, and you love yourself. And then, **“Wives, respect your husbands.”**

Stop right there. Talk about lopsided, talk about disproportionate! And excuse me, but “love my wife as Christ” - how am I going to do that? You're not. The only way you're going to do that, like we started, is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When I do a wedding, I usually, if they'll let me, I'll use this passage. I give them the warning ahead of time. You know what I'm going to talk about, when I do their wedding, which is why I ever get asked to do anything anymore. But, you know, it's like, I'll ask the groom, “How are you going to love your wife like dat?”

He looks at me with that look. You know the look again, right? Just like I don't know! Oh, you're not. It's going to be by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the only way you can love her like that. Because what is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Love.

Okay, one last thing, and then we'll... Early on in our marriage today, I was a pious, you know, proud jerk, you know, and I thought I was so deeply profound, you know?

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And I said to my wife, in that tone, that husbandly tone, you know, “Honey, I love you with a love that only comes from God.” I thought she would be so moved, like “Oh, honey, you’re the best!”

She didn't do that. She looked at me with that look that only a can give. And she's all hurt, like, you mean you can't muster - I'm so unlovable you can't muster up any love in and of yourself for me? You've got to love me with a love that can only come from God?

Like how do you do that, women, wives? How do you do that? That’s not what I meant. You take the - we're trying, remember? We're trying. Give us a break. Be patient with us. We don't get it. We're idiots. We're trying. I love you.

Because in a way it was true. Not that I can't love with, but I can't love her like THIS in and of myself. The only way I'm going to love her as Christ loves the church is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that's the only way I'm going to love her like that. That should be a relief, right, guys, to know that this is the source, that the Lord provides me, by way of the Holy Spirit, the love that I need for my wife to love her in this way?

And by the way, I have yet to meet a man that doesn't want his wife to respect him. “You respect me, woman.”

“You love me, man.” Isn't respect earned?

“Wives, respect your husbands.”

Well, if your husband is not loving you, how are you going to respect him? The wife who's loved in this way has no problem respecting her husband. In fact, it's going to come quite easily, thank you very much.

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And conversely, it works the other way, sadly. When the wife is not loved in this way, she's not going to have any respect for her husband.

And this whole authority thing: When your wife, husband, sees you submitted to the authority of Jesus Christ, whoa, that's how God made them. They have no problem submitting to that authority and respecting that authority and not usurping that authority because you're submitted to His authority.

They're safe, they're secure. They know. They're like, "Wow, thank you, honey. You're submitted to the Lord, and I'm going to submit to you. You love the Lord. I'm going to love you. You respect and reverence the Lord; I'm going to respect and reverence you. I might even, as Peter said, call you Lord. I don't know yet. We'll see."

(Chuckling)

Or "master," if you prefer; I don't know.

Okay, that's fine. Kapono, come on up and get me out of this. And why don't you stand up and we'll pray. Oh, laughter's medicine, right, the Proverbs say?

And that's the other thing, too. You need to laugh more in your marriage and not just with each other. I think it's fully appropriate to laugh at each other too. Laughter is good. Don't take yourself so seriously, especially the husband, right?

Father, thank You! Lord, I don't want to in any way make light of the seriousness of the marital conflict and relationships that many are experiencing, Lord. But I do pray that in some way this is helpful and encouraging.

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Lord, I do pray for us as husbands though, that we would be the kind of husbands that our wives want to submit to and respect. We want to be those godly husbands that love our wives the way that You, Jesus, love us and gave Yourself for us.

Thank You, Lord, for the setting the bar, and not just setting the bar that high, but also empowering us and enabling us to be able to attain and achieve that standard by the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, Lord, for the “how” of Holy Spirit to do the “what” of Your Holy Word, especially as it relates to the marriage relationship, in Jesus name.
Amen.