

**HOME**  
**The Unexpected Practices of Marriage**  
**1 Peter 3**

God's ordering of things always seems BACKWARDS to us. If you want to be FIRST, then GO LAST. If you want to RECEIVE, then you must GIVE. If you want to LIVE, then you must DIE. If you want to LEAD, then you must SERVE. These are God's orders, and he not only CREATED them, Christ Jesus MODELED every one of them for us. Today, we will focus on the UNEXPECTED PRACTICES of a HEALTHY MARRIAGE.

**1 PETER 2:13-16, 21-24 NIV**

**13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority:** whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; **live as God's slaves . . . 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.** 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. **Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.** 24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

The greatest power in the world is the UNEXPECTED POWER OF SUBMISSION. Those who learn to be UNDER AUTHORITY are the ones who actually wind up exerting the GREATEST INFLUENCE on those around them. It takes time and faith, but it always winds up being true. The early followers of Christ lived this out in such a way that they RADICALLY IMPACTED the 1<sup>st</sup> Century world. They turned religion on its ear, and they forced the world to reckon with the reality of Christ's resurrection by their dogged determination to follow him as their LORD. His ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY in their lives was the FOUNDATION for their response to all other authorities in their lives. **Submission was a SIGN of HIS SPIRIT and HIS STRENGTH in their lives.** They knew that submission to Christ was the only way that they could change a world in which they were vastly outnumbered and grossly misunderstood. This found expression even in the most basic context of life: Marriage! Both Peter and Paul prefaced their instructions on marriage with this same principle: **Ephesians 5:21 NIV**  
**21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

This is NOT what we expected to experience in marriage! **When we come across something that looks like it is the answer to our prayers for happiness and fulfillment, we race to embrace it as our own. Then, reality sets in!** You see, God knows what he is doing. He has the most amazing way of using even our selfish desires to bring us into the very place where we can best learn and grow. We think we are getting what we WANT, but wherever we wind up he makes sure that we get what we NEED. Our homes are the perfect example of this truth. Let me ask you a question. **When you**

**married your one and only, did you do it so that you could learn how to be a less stubborn and self-centered person?** Did you get married so that you would NOT be so fixated on your OWN needs and desires? I am pretty confident that this was NOT why you got married. You got married to your beautiful wife or your hot husband because they made you HAPPY. They were the answer to your prayers! **Now the truth is, when you first got married it was actually YOUR PLEASURE TO SERVE YOUR SPOUSE!** You loved meeting their needs and making them happy because it made you happy that you made them happy. And everyone was happy. But now look at where you are!!! **WHAT HAPPENED TO HAPPY?** Isn't it funny that when we get married, we think it will ALWAYS be our primary joy and greatest pleasure to meet the needs of this one who has FOREVER made us feel special? They seem to be our EVERLASTING SOURCE OF GENUINE SATISFACTION. This lasts approximately three weeks. Of course, when they cease to make us feel special then we cease desiring to meet their needs. We live in a world of **CONDITIONAL LOVE** and **CONDITIONAL RESPECT**. Both sides of every marriage have much to learn! Perhaps we can **BOTH GROW A LITTLE TODAY**. Your call!

Let's look now in detail at what Peter says to wives and to husbands about their respective roles in the home. We will see in these verses the following two principles on mutual submission: **In marriage, the wife must practice submission to her husband's authority [RESPECT], and the husband must practice submission to his wife's needs [LOVE].** Submission is not a **ONE-SIDED SUBJECT!** **1 Peter 3:1-2 NIV**

**1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.**

**I want to remind us all that OUR REAL CHARACTER IS MOST CLEARLY EXPOSED AT HOME!** No other context more accurately REVEALS where we really are in our Christian maturity than our MARRIAGE. **For the record, no other context better REFINES where you are in your maturity either!** Peter reinforces this by telling wives that the decision they make to RESPECT their husband's authority as they live pure, Christ-honoring lives will be the GREATEST SERMON THEY WILL EVER PREACH! This is the WORDLESS SERMON of a GODLY WIFE. It does not mean that she never shares her faith with her lost husband. It just means that she does not DROWN him in words about it. Instead, she surprises him with an attitude of Christ-like RESPECT. **Did you know that respect is a man's greatest need?** You may think it is love, but nearly every man in this room will tell you that what he wants more than anything is to be respected. In fact, before you married him I bet that you made him feel he was the greatest man in the whole world! I know that he needs love, but his first need is respect. Listen to how **Dr. Emerson Eggerichs** describes this: **[Love and Respect – P. 49-50].** Any man who has a wife who is articulate and intelligent and capable in her own right, but who WILLINGLY CHOOSES to RESPECT and SUBMIT TO the LEADERSHIP of her HUSBAND; THAT MAN IS A BLESSED MAN!! He has NO

REASON to be PROUD, but he has EVERY REASON to be GRATEFUL and HUMBLE. There is a lesson to be learned here by both men and women.

When I think about my own bride I am overwhelmed with gratitude. I did not marry a doormat or “the little lady”. I MARRIED A WOMAN. She has done more to inspire and encourage and challenge me than any other person in my life! And she did not have to do it. She VOLUNTARILY CHOSE to submit to my leadership in times when I simply did not deserve it. She could have mocked me and pointed out my weaknesses and my failures, but instead she chose to believe in me. When I confessed to an addiction to pornography early in our marriage, she WORKED THROUGH THE HURT WITH ME and still determined to FOLLOW ME in my brokenness as I grew. Tell me that will not inspire a man to be better than he ever was! She lived out what Dr. Eggerichs calls UNCONDITIONAL RESPECT. In the church, we always hear about the importance of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, but the idea of unconditional respect seems . . . wrong! But is it? We know that we should not have to earn love, and that unearned love is often responsible for the most loving of behaviors, but isn't it also possible that UNEARNED RESPECT can lead to RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR? Ladies, this is the true way to your husband's heart and spiritual life. It is not meant to boost up an ARROGANT ATTITUDE in him, but to encourage his most noble, God-given attributes.

Peter goes on to instruct wives not to trade their greater power for a lesser power.

**1 Peter 3:3-4 NIV**

3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, 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.

Here, Peter reminds us that submission is more powerful than SEX APPEAL. Your outward beauty may be stunning, but it is DIMINISHING with every tick of the clock. This world is constantly pressuring women to LOOK SEXY and DRESS SEXY. It is truly scary to watch people watch women in this world. The men are checking them out, but so are the other women; just for different reasons. But when two people get in a long-term relationship, beauty alone no longer has the ability to SUSTAIN it. A beautiful woman with an ugly spirit is just . . . UGLY! (Same thing for the guys, dudes!) Instead, we should look to God to see what HE VALUES in us. In this passage, he says that a meek and quiet spirit is of great value to God. MEEK is one of only two terms that Christ used to describe himself! It means humble strength; strength under control. When Peter uses the word quiet, he does not mean that you make no sound. The word QUIET is defined as “still, undisturbed, and peaceable.” It is literally translated as “keeping one's seat” when calamity abounds! What a great picture of one who DOES NOT PANIC. Is Christ forming that spirit in you at home, ladies? Let's look at one last thing before we move on to the instructions to the men in this passage.

**1 Peter 3:5-6 NIV**

5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who

obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

I can just see some of you ladies clenching your teeth as I read that passage. But before your eyes pop out of your head, I want to help you see what it really means. You have to actually go to the place in scripture where this happens in order to understand it. You see, Sarah was a beautiful woman. She and Abraham were married for decades, and they both had their share of problems in the marriage. Abraham asked her to lie for him and she told Abraham to have a baby with their servant Hagar. There were several times in their marriage when Abraham listened to Sarah! Be careful what you ask for. Pretty messed up, huh? Anyway, I looked to see where in scripture that Sarah called Abraham "lord." I could not find it. As far as I can see, she called him Abraham or Abe (or maybe "Babe"! ). What I did find was even more astonishing. Here is the reference.

**Genesis 18:12 NASB**

12 Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

You see, Sara only called him lord silently IN HER MIND. Big deal, you say? You bet it is! It means that she had a deep INWARD ATTITUDE OF RESPECT toward her husband. When was the last time you thought about your husband and just naturally referred to him inwardly in terms of his position of authority in your life? He could never have demanded that! **I think it speaks much more highly of her than of him.** I also think it is directly related to a principle that Peter points out in this same passage that we just read in 1 Peter. **Did you notice that the holy women of old PUT THEIR HOPE IN GOD as they SUBMITTED TO THEIR HUSBANDS.** This is not something that you should miss. You are NEVER encouraged in scripture to PUT YOUR HOPE IN YOUR HUSBAND. He cannot be your hope! Remember, Christ is our LIVING HOPE. The book of Hebrews says that this Hope is an Anchor for our souls. If you are hoping in your husband (or your wife, or your child) then YOU WILL BE GREATLY DISAPPOINTED! If Christ is your hope however, then you will have joy no matter how your circumstances may be going. Your hope is not dependent on how well your spouse may be doing at the time. You are free to love them and show honor and respect to them even when they are failing. They are not your hope.

Now guys, it is our turn. You just thought you were gonna get away without being challenged. No such luck! Let's see what Peter had to say to us as husbands.

**1 Peter 3:7 NIV**

7 Husbands, **in the same way** be considerate as you live with your wives, 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.

There is so much packed into that one little verse. Guys, it blows my mind when I hear a man arrogantly boast about his leadership in the home. If you are truly a leader in your home the way **Christ defined leadership**, then PRIDE has no place in you. You

are called to LEAD BY SERVING! The husband must learn to SUBMIT to his wife's needs! In 1 Peter, this means that you have to DISCOVER your WIFE'S NEEDS and MEET THEM as you live with her. **You see, your AUTHORITY is NOT FOR YOU but for the ones that you lead!** Furthermore, your wife MAY be physically weaker than you (or not!), but she is an EQUAL PARTNER with you in the Kingdom of God. Peter (a married man) says that we need to dwell with our wives "according to UNDERSTANDING." **This means we are to love her by LEARNING her deepest needs (Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, Intellectual) and STRIVING to meet them!** In Ephesians, Paul puts this in terms we can all understand. **Ephesians 5:25-29 NIV**

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.**

Guys, did you get that? Do you know when you are thirsty, or hungry, or cold? What do you do when you feel these things? YOU MOVE TO MEET THEM. This is what you are called to do for your wife. **Husbands, I believe that God has placed the GREATER RESPONSIBILITY on us in our role.** We are called to LOVE our wives UNCONDITIONALLY. This should create a greater DEPENDENCE on God in us rather than a FOOLISH heart of arrogance. If we do not get this, then Peter says that our SPIRITUAL LIFE (among other things) will be DISRUPTED. **Your spiritual life is only as real as the reality of your SUBMISSION TO CHRIST in your role at home!** It should also be noted that any wife who has a husband who LOVES and LEADS the way Christ commands him to will JOYFULLY SUBMIT TO HIS LEADERSHIP. In fact, when BOTH follow biblical instructions for marriage, then they get to experience a home that looks like this: **1 Peter 3:8-9 NIV**

**8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.**

Who wouldn't want that? So, here is what I want us to do with the message today. **First - If you are a man – I want you to IGNORE everything I said that was aimed at the wife.** If you use it in any fashion as a scripture club, YOU ARE A FOOL. Ladies, the same goes for you! Each of you must focus only on the instructions that were meant for you. YOU CANNOT DEMAND that the other do their part. PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD AND DO WHAT HE HAS COMMANDED YOU TO DO!

Husbands: This week, look for the UNMET needs of your wife (Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, etc.) and strive to meet them WITHOUT FANFARE! **Ask yourself: Would you want to follow you if you were married to you?** Furthermore, leadership implies

that your family is GOING SOMEWHERE. Where are you leading your family, guys? Last, I urge you to commit to PRAY for your wife every day.

Wives: This week, choose to EXPRESS RESPECT to your husband in the way you talk TO him and ABOUT HIM to others. Find practical, specific ways to genuinely BUILD HIM UP as you PRAY for him daily. What did God convict you about during this message? Focus on submitting to God IN THAT AREA!

Let's pray.

## **HOME**

### **Southaven Facilitation Guide**

### **The Unexpected Practices of a Healthy Marriage**

#### **Start talking**

What was the most fun thing you did as a married couple this week? (Besides sex!)

#### **Start thinking.**

What aspects of marriage have surprised you the most since your wedding day?

#### **Start sharing.**

[Read 1 Peter 2:13-16, 21-24.](#) Why does Peter put such emphasis on the importance of submission? How did Christ display submission for us?

[Read Ephesians 5:21.](#) Why did Paul preface his instructions on marriage by insisting on mutual submission in our relationship? Talk about the practical meaning of mutual submission.

[Read 1 Peter 3:1-6.](#) How does this passage affect you? What are the potential risks of this type of submission for wives? What are its potential rewards?

[Read Ephesians 5:25-29 and 1 Peter 3:7.](#) How does this passage affect you? What are the potential costs of this type of submission for husbands? What are its potential rewards?

How can these types of mutual submission be appropriate for all believers, whether they are married or not?

#### **Start praying.**

Have spouses pray for one another (out loud!).

#### **Start doing.**

Have married couples practice the ideas Pastor Rick suggested this week. [Look for unmet needs to meet; Look for ways to express respect.]