

Spiritual Authority in the Home

Tina-Our marriage story-We all know that we had a marriage crisis. I felt very desperate and hopeless. At that time, I didn't know what to do but I knew I could not fix things and I was screaming from the inside someone please help me, help us! I will be honest that I did believe everything was Allen's fault! I know now that we both were broken and God had a lot of work to do! God is so faithful!

- **Allen**-We have not had a perfect marriage. When we talk about marriage stuff it would be easy to assume our marriage has been easy so of course we do this stuff. Marriage is hard. Marriage has pushed us into Jesus, exposed our immaturity, and forced us to grow up.
- **Tina-Singles**- We have a lot of singles in our church and when we talk about marriage, we always want to be careful not to make you feel like you are a second-class Christian because you are not married. Believe me there are days when I know all the married people in the room would say I wish I was single! Can I get an amen?! Jesus was single and Paul was single. In **1 Corinthians 7:7**, Paul says I wish everyone was single so our loyalty was not divided between Jesus and a spouse. If you are single your loyalty is to Jesus and like all of us the church is your family.
- **Allen-Plus, we are all married to Christ**. In fact, we are going to learn today that God intends for marriage to reflect our relationship with Jesus. I am supposed to treat/relate to Tina the way Christ relates to me. Tina is supposed to treat/relate to me the way the church relates to Christ. She is the bride. Our marriage should reflect to our world the relationship Christ has with His church. If we make that our goal, marriage is a beautiful thing. Eph. 5:25

Tina-Read: 1 Peter 3:1-5, I know this will shock you but I am not perfect. The topic of submitting to our husbands is a sensitive topic in our culture. I am in process of becoming like Jesus just like you and Jesus has been reading my mail the last couple of months over this issue. I am going to tell you what the Bible says about submission and I am slowly learning that God always knows what is best!

1. Trust God. 1 Peter 3:1a

Peter again says, "In the same way," which points back to Chapter 2 verse 13, where Paul said, "for the Lord's sake". I submit to Allen's authority, for the Lord's sake. In other words, the issue is not do I trust Allen. The issue is do I trust God. I went back and read all of Chapter 2 over and over. When I look at the way Jesus lived and what He did for me, I want to live to please Him. Jesus submitted to his Father's authority when he went to the cross for us. Peter says we are to go so far as to suffer like Jesus did. God uses marriage to show us how to lay down our lives and serve someone else.

Testimony: Allen was independent, insensitive, judgmental, demanding, and addicted to porn. I didn't want to serve this man. I wasn't sure I wanted to stay married to him!

Remember: When we are learning to live under the authority God has placed in our lives, we have to answer three questions:

- a. **Is God good?** Do I believe that God is good and all that He asks me to do is for my benefit and His glory? After 24 years, the answer is yes. Marriage was hard, painful, but good. The truth is marriage made us better. This is why God said, it is not good for man to be alone. Singles, this is why it is so important to be relationally connected so that God can work through the church to produce the same maturity in our life.
- b. **Is God sovereign?** Do I believe that God was working in my broken marriage? Twenty years ago I couldn't imagine that God could do what he has done in our marriage and he did it by meeting us in the crisis! I see now that God had a plan and he has allowed us to help other couples who are in a marriage crisis. God has used marriage to put his finger on my stubborn and prideful will. The past couple of months the God has been speaking to me about an area in marriage that I had dug my heels in the ground and was determined to have my way. Finally I had to just bow my knee to Jesus and surrender my pride to Him. I also had to ask Allen to forgive me. I was mad and I didn't want to do it. I can't just submit when Allen is perfect because he never will be. God just calls me to submit and I am so thankful that Jesus didn't wait until I was perfect to give his life for me.
- c. **Do I believe in the power of the gospel?** Do I believe, the most powerful thing I can do to change my spouse is to love him or her? We can try manipulation, throw a fit, or withdrawing but it doesn't get us the love that we all want. In fact, even if that produces compliance it will never produce love. My goal is not to control Allen but to help him to do all that God has called him to do. I want to help Allen to be a strong man! It requires strength to love me like Jesus loves me!

**This would never justify abuse. If I am in an abusive relationship what do I do?

- Separation
- Healing
- Grow, what can I learn, how can God deepen my faith?
- Let us work with your spouse
- When the time is right, Reconciliation

I Trust God by living under the authority of my husband. Headship is a picture of our relationship with Jesus and a powerful witness in our world. Submission is a heart issue not a rule, can't think of many times we didn't agree and had to let Allen decide independently, fence illustration, I feel secure under the covering of my husband. This is the role that God called us to play as wives but it has great power **Genesis 2:17**, "You will desire to control your husband and He will rule over you." Peter is saying, do not try to control your husband. This is a huge issue in American culture. Ladies, you can put your husband under your thumb if you want but if you do, he will be unable to love you the way all women want to be loved. He will not honor you, he will resent you. And when a woman at work submits to his authority and treats him like a king, your marriage will be in trouble.

Next week, Peter says, do not rule over her, honor her. We will talk to the men next week. Submission is emotionally difficult but next week what we will see if God's instruction to men is lay down your life. This is God's picture of marriage and it is a powerful witness to our world. Tina, you don't understand. I am not married to a man like Allen. Neither was I. When I decided to live under Allen's authority, he was not the man you know. But God has used me in Allen's life to help him to become a great man

2. Guard your witness. 1 Peter 1:1b-2

Tina- Even though I was depressed, I felt neglected, I felt alone, I knew my witness and my kingdom impact is more important than my rights. I wanted to leave Allen and go back to my parents but God was asking me to trust him. Today, when I see Allen on stage, when I read the books he is writing, when I think about all the lives that He has impacted I am so grateful that God gave me the faith to trust Him to work in the heart of my husband.

- I did not lecture Allen
- I did not try to fix Allen
- I loved him. He had Dr. Bennett and other men at church working on him. My job was to love him.

I caught Allen looking at porn. Do you know why men struggle so much with porn, especially men who were not loved and affirmed by their father? They want to be wanted. Allen wanted to be wanted and porn says to a man, I want you. If I reject Him, if I am angry with Him, if I do not have grace for Him then I contribute to his vulnerability. When I show him love he is less vulnerable to porn or other women. That does not mean I am responsible for his sin. What it does mean is one way I can strengthen my husband is to love him well. I want to make sure Allen knows I choose you. I love you. I want you. That motivates Him to love and serve me. When He loves and serves me, I am motivated to love and serve him. We are strengthening each other.

This is what we mean but trusting in the power of the gospel. The fruit of the Spirit is love. I will reap what I sow. If I sow love, I receive love back. If I sow rejection, I usually experience rejection.

3. Cultivate your beauty. 1 Peter 3:3-4

I want to offer Allen my beauty. I believe a woman brings beauty into the world, into our homes, and into the church and that we all long for, enjoy, and are refreshed by beauty. Date night last week! I wanted to look my best for my man. I am grateful Allen does the same for me. Do you want to describe what you do to look beautiful? His needs her needs. A man has a woman at work or the gym telling him how wonderful he is. You better tell him or someone else will.

Peter tells us how to let our beauty bless our husband and honor God.

- a. **My external beauty should reflect my inner beauty.** If I am not cultivating the condition of my heart no amount of makeup can cancel that.
- b. **My external beauty is a work of the flesh. My internal beauty is a work of the Spirit.** In all that we are talking about. If I am not connecting with Jesus, it is almost impossible to live this way. Rather than blessing Allen, I become selfish

and demanding. When I let God fill my cup, I am ready to pour out my love on my husband and family.

- c. **My external beauty is diminishing.** My internal beauty is increasing.
- d. **Gentle and quiet spirit.** This does not mean women do not have a voice. Even in the Old Testament, Deborah was a judge and ruled Israel. What it means is with Allen, I want to communicate with Him in a gentle and respectful way. I do not always do this but I want to. Generally, when a woman dominates a man, he loses his desire and capacity to love her well.

1 Peter 3:5-6, Sarah- if she would have been an American, she would have ditched Abraham when he asked her to tell everyone, you are my sister. She trusted God and God worked through Sarah to bring the messiah into the world. She could have let her pride rob her of the blessing. Instead, she trusted God, humbled herself, and changed the world. We have to decide if we want to be right and live for the moment or if we want to be holy, set apart for God, and live for eternity.