

Good Morning Newsong!!! Good morning church family!!! Good morning first time visitors!

We are so glad you could visit us today. In case you don't know me, my name is DeLeassa and I am the outreach director here at Newsong. I am passionate about reaching others in our community and across the world for Jesus. I don't normally preach but a couple of times a year Pastor Mike allows me the opportunity. I'm still pretty new at this so if you don't like it...don't worry. You can come back next week and hear Pastor Mike. He will do much better I assure you! Actually I appreciate that we have a pastor that takes time to refuel himself and also pushes all the leaders at our church to grow and step out in new areas. Thank you Pastor Mike for your leadership and encouragement in this area in my life.

This summer we are going through the book of 1 Peter verse by verse. It has been insightful and challenging. Our summer series is titled, "Strange World, Good God". That title alone can preach! I want to remind you that 1 Peter was written by Peter to various churches that were facing rejection and persecution because of their faith in Jesus. These words are for all of us today!

In Week 1, Peter reminded us, the church, of our identity and that we are God's Chosen people.

Week 2, we learned that we need to live holy lives, play by God's rules and move forward.

Week 3, Pastor Barbara spoke of our purpose in Christ

Last week, Jacob spoke about submission. We learned that we are to submit to the government that is in place, our employers, and most importantly submit to Jesus.

We all might agree that submission is a hard topic to talk about and to digest but today we are gonna take it one step further. We are going to talk about submission within marriage. I know, I know...I am right there with you. I thought of a million reasons why I should not be the speaker today. I considered telling Pastor Mike I can't do it. First and foremost, I struggle with this. I will share more about that with you later but just know this. I'm a work in progress, we are a work in progress and today I am going to submit to the call of Jesus in my life and I'm going to share with you some of the insights He has given me over the past few

years and even more so over the past few weeks as I have studied these verses. Would you join me as we read and study the word of God together?

1 Peter 3:1-7

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, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 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. 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, 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. 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.

Before we go any further I want to give you some historical context related to this scripture. To fully understand the meaning Peter had, we have to understand the society he lived in.

According to Jewish law – women were possessions owned by their husbands. On no account could a woman leave her husband although he could dismiss her at any time. Under Roman law – women had no rights. She remained forever a child and was ruled by her father and then her husband. Women were completely at the mercy of their husband even to the point of life and death. Under both laws– women would follow their husbands religion. It was unthinkable for a woman to follow a religion that her husband did not follow. The consequences would be severe.

You should also note that Christianity contrasted greatly with these thoughts regarding women and their rights during this time. Christianity stated husbands should love their wives unconditionally and women were able and even

encouraged to make decisions about their faith for themselves. It is actually almost inconceivable for us to understand what it might have meant for a woman in that day and age to make a decision to follow Christ when her husband continued to follow his ancestral gods.

Let me clarify a few things before we go any further:

- These verses do not condone and we at Newsong do not condone in any form – abuse. Not physical, emotional, or mental abuse. If you find yourself in an abusive relationship and need help. Someone from our pastoral staff will be happy to meet with you and assist you in getting the help you need. Please reach out to us.
- Submission does not equal inferiority. It took me a long time to truly understand this. But we ultimately have to look to Jesus as our example. I would contend that Jesus is not inferior to God, the Father. They are each a part of the Trinity and work in harmony together. And yet, you see that Jesus submitted his will to the Father's and went to the cross.

Matthew 26:39 Jesus says, "My Father if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

We see here that submission is more about functionality than superiority in this context and in the context in which we are talking today. When I say functionality I mean there is a purpose. A sacrifice was required for salvation. Submission made the sacrifice possible and the result was salvation for all mankind.

- The last clarification I want to make is that these verses are not a call for all women to submit to all men. These verses call a particular woman to submit to a particular man, her husband. Once again this is not about superiority or inferiority.

Paul tells us in **Galations 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jacob talked to us last week about the word submission and that the original word *hupotasso* had 2 meanings. One was the military form of submission but the other was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. It is not a spineless submission but a voluntary selflessness.

This second meaning was the version that Peter used when he was writing 1 Peter Chapter 3. Let me say it again, It is not a spineless submission, but voluntary selflessness. It is courageous, it is contrary to everything we may have been taught and everything the world tells us but it is bold and life-changing. Submission leads to salvation. These verses clearly indicate that the submissive actions of a wife can lead to the salvation of her unbelieving husband. Likewise Christ's submission unto the cross provided all of us with the opportunity of salvation.

Today we are talking about submission within the context of marriage but I challenge you whether married or not to pay close attention. You see the Christian life whether married or single is a life of submission. I believe you can take the points we are going to speak about today and apply them to any relationship and you will see God move. When you choose voluntary selflessness...lives will be changed. There was no greater example of voluntary selflessness than that of Christ and all of our lives have been changed because of his submission. Like I said Submission leads to salvation.

If you do find yourself married today or you plan on getting married in the future, I think you will find yourself in 1 of 3 scenarios.

1. Neither you or your spouse are believers. These verses don't apply to you. If you find yourself curious or wanting to know more about becoming a follower of Christ, our pastoral staff will be happy to meet and pray with you after service. But if you are not a follower of Christ, you will find it almost impossible to live or even understand a life of submission. Don't worry! Salvation is free and you can become a believer today if you so choose.
2. One spouse is a believer and the other is not. These verses were specifically written for you! Maybe you became a Christian after you got married and your spouse did not. Maybe you were both Christians when you got married and then your spouse left the faith. Perhaps you knowingly married an unbeliever despite your beliefs. For whatever reason today, you find yourself in a difficult season of following Christ within your marriage alone. Can I just encourage you today? Is your path difficult. Absolutely! Is it at times lonely? Almost certainly, but I assure you Jesus is with you. Stay the course! These words today are for you as an encouragement not a

discouragement. If I know anything, I know your heart yearns and prays for the day of salvation for your love. Can I remind you? Submission leads to salvation. Some of the most beautiful examples of submission, honor and voluntary selflessness I have seen have been in the lives of friends of mine that have unsaved spouses. I have a particular friend that I have known for years and her husband battled addiction as long as I have known her. It has been ugly, painful, and I'm sure humiliating at times for her. I have seen this person love her husband, never disrespect him in front of others, honor him and show him Jesus through her actions. I believe through her submission he was eventually able to accept the salvation that Jesus offered him.

3. The third scenario you could find yourself in and I truly hope you do is that you and your spouse are both believers. In this case, these words apply to both of you! You are called to equally submit and honor each other. This sounds easier than it actually is because our human nature is to wait for the other one to submit first but God has called each of us to do so regardless of the actions of the other. It is a choice just as Pastor Barbara spoke of love being a choice so is submission. It is a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. My examples today are going to be from personal experience so they will be in the context of a marriage with 2 believers. If you are married to an unbeliever this still applies. It will be harder but when the going gets tough remind yourself that submission leads to salvation.

Remember how I said earlier that submission was about functionality. It is about order...God's order. It is based on the death of pride on one hand and the desire to serve on the other. Once we accept that there is nothing degrading about submitting to authority and accepting God's order, we need to learn how we actually do it? If you are like me...I want to know how? Give me the steps or the process to make it work. Unfortunately submission is harder than just wanting to be submissive. It's not like snapping your fingers or following these easy 3 steps. It is a continuous process of selflessness.

I have a story I want to share with you...

You are on vacation in Puerto Rico (true story) and the day is beautiful. Everything has been going just perfectly. You and your spouse decide to go kayaking in the lagoon. What could go wrong?

You get in the kayak and realize that your seat is broken and very uncomfortable which causes you to keep trying to adjust said seat. Your spouse who is in the back of the kayak does not like your abrupt movements and fears you are about to tip the entire kayak over. He says on multiple occasions to, "Be Still!" You don't like his tone of voice and you are uncomfortable so you decide fine...I will be still I will not move a single solitary muscle. That's all nice and good except now that you are in the kayak you have to row to get anywhere that you want to go. Since you have now committed to not moving, your spouse must now struggle to row your kayak all by himself while you just sit there and stew about how ridiculous it was that he yelled at you for moving in the first place.

If you are having a hard time envisioning this, let me help you.

Tech team you can bring up the visual aid.

Ahh...here it is. Yes that is me and Pastor Dustin on the kayak and he is struggling to row us around the lagoon. It is not easy because the ocean feeds directly into this lagoon and the waves are pushing us in one direction. I am literally sitting there not helping one bit and everyone around us is rowing in perfect harmony with their kayak partners having a lovely time. They are zipping by us and we are barely moving. Pastor Dustin is rowing and I am having a complete pity party thinking about the verses that Pastor Mike just assigned to me a few days before about submission.

So with this scenario in mind...how do we actually submit? Well it's a process and it all begins this first step:

1. Entrust our lives to God

1 Peter 2:23-25

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. 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. For you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

God is the overseer of our souls – Jesus submitted unto the cross for us. When my relationship with Christ is such that I can entrust everything I am to Him then I can begin to submit to whatever His will is. This is extremely important if you are married to an unbeliever. Many believe Peter wrote these verses in particular to believers that were married to unbelievers to encourage the church during that time to be a support system to those who were walking this difficult path. When you entrust your life to Jesus no matter what your spouse does, Jesus will have your back. My spouse whether believing or unbelieving will fail me but Jesus never will!

If you are married to a believer and ultimately know that they have submitted their lives to Christ you can also know that they have accepted the call to love you as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

This is the awesomeness of being married to a believer. You see while I was on that kayak doing my best to ruin our day, I thought to myself a couple of times that maybe Pastor Dustin would just knock me in the back of the head with that oar. I mean it was pretty frustrating for him and I knew it. Plus I was taking video and photos of his struggle which probably aggravated him even more but deep down I knew he wasn't going to knock me out with the oar despite my behavior because I was confident in His love for me. This is an amazing way to be in relationship with someone. It by no means excuses my behavior but I wanted to point out that when I entrust my life to God and I am also married to a believer, I can also entrust my life to my spouse when his love is grounded in God's love first. For those not yet married, this is why it is sooooo important who you choose to marry. Just a few words of advice, if they don't love Jesus then they won't know how to truly love you. No matter your marital status, we must entrust our lives fully to the one who gave us life.

Next we must

2. Develop Godly Character

1 Peter 3:2-5

when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 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. 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,

These verses are not about what clothes you wear or your hairstyle. They are simply saying the inside is what matters.

Galations 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The fruits of the Spirit are what should be exhibited in our lives and should be seen more clearly than our appearance. This can be freeing for some of us that might feel like we never wear the right thing or look good enough. That stuff really doesn't matter in the end and that is not what is going to lead to salvation. In fact our clothes and hairstyle don't amount to anything if our actions to our spouses are not Godly.

In fact Proverbs 31 describes a wife of noble character and states **She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value Proverbs 31: 10 & 11**

To put this in context for you, during the time that Peter is writing this what a women wore was an indication of the wealth of her husband. He provided what she wore and how she was able to braid her hair. These verses are letting the women who had no rights beyond what her husband brought to the table know that her character was what really brought value and unlike her clothes or hair she was able to control those things.

One other note here... these verses talk about a quiet spirit...quiet does not equal silent. Quiet can equate to tone, temperature, and thought.

One of the ways my husband treats me with consideration and respect is to hear what I have to say. He understands that although we think completely different, my thoughts and ideas have value. We make a better team when we both have a voice and can be heard. My voice is heard and not ignored when I speak with a quiet spirit.

Women – nagging is not respectful behavior or Godly character and after years of experience I can say it does not bring about change it more than likely causes your spouse to ignore anything you have to say.

Men – demeaning or making fun of your wife is not Godly Character. If you do this because her views are not the same as yours.. you will find that she will become silent. Silence in a marriage is never a good thing. No matter how smart you are or think you are, I assure you 2 brains are always better than 1.

After our time on the kayak had ended and I had time to think through this process of submission since I was going to be preaching on it in a few weeks, I realized I needed to submit my will by assuming responsibility for my actions. I could have went to Pastor Dustin and said I didn't like your tone, you ruined our day on the kayak, etc. That would not have been Godly character nor would it have helped our marriage. I needed to admit that I had been wrong, that I was not kind in my actions towards him. When I was able to go to him with a quiet spirit – he met me with his own apology for failing to be gentle in his words and tone. We were then able to forgive each other. No further detail is needed but I assure you our vacation was lovely and we thoroughly enjoyed our remaining time together on the island. Once we have entrusted our lives to God and developed Godly Character we need apply this next step.

3. Act don't React

1 Peter 3:6

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.

These verses imply we will do what is right or we will give in to fear.

First of all...Jacob touched on this last week...Submission does not require us to violate other scripture. If you are married to a non-believer these scriptures do not require you to submit to your spouse in regards to

anything that is against God. Meaning if your husband wants you to go rob a bank with him...you can boldly say nope...can't do it. The bible clearly says "Thou shalt not steal!"

Contrary to what you might believe Submission in the context we are discussing here is not based on fear but on love.

If I get totally honest with you about my struggles with submission it stems from fear. Fear from past hurts and past traumas. Fear that I'll be hurt in the future. Fear that my spouse will let me down. Fear that I will be viewed as weak. The list goes on and on. Women you may be able to understand me better than the men here today but my brain is always going a million miles an hour down a long list of what if's and how can I prevent such and such from potentially happening. This fear despite everything else can cause me to fail to honor or submit to my husband. You've probably heard that there are 2 reactions to fear: fight or flight. Well, I like to fight! Tell me I can't do something and I will show you otherwise. This can be dangerous in a marital relationship. Some of you choose flight, you like to flee...fear actually paralyzes you. This is also dangerous in a marital relationship. Either way fear destroys our relationships, our marriages, and our witness for Jesus because we constantly react instead of act.

How do we combat that reaction to fear? We must Act and choose to do what is right despite our fears. How do we do that...we must act in love.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Acting in Love Requires us to

4. Give Consideration and Respect

1 Peter 3:7

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.

Husbands can I just say, you are so very important to your home to your wife and to your children. Several statistics indicate that if the husband gets saved first the

rest of the family will more than likely also get saved. I could throw out numbers that say 93% of the time the entire family will get saved if the husband is saved first compared to 17% of the time if the wife gets saved first. I don't know how accurate those numbers are but I do know that we often see a lot more women at church with unbelieving husbands compared to husbands with unbelieving wives. Men...submit your lives to God and lead your families to Jesus! Amen.

Notice it says Husbands, In the same way...this means all the above, everything we just talked about applies to you too! And then it also says. Be considerate.

Be considerate. What does that mean. Well the dictionary defines "considerate" as careful not to cause inconvenience or hurt to someone or giving careful thought.

Can you imagine what would happen if we would apply consideration to all our relationships and even all our encounters with others?!

Peter then goes on to say "treat them with respect"

Do you all remember that book Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus? Sometimes we need insight from God because in our own human nature we honestly just don't "get" our spouse. There have been many times when Dustin and I have agreed to disagree because neither of us can understand each others point of view. It makes no sense to us. We have learned over the years that when issues like this pop up we need to agree to disagree and then we need to pray. We ask for God's wisdom and for Him to give us the consideration and respect that our spouse needs.

James 3:17

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Before I share this next story I should clarify something about myself... First of all I think you should know that I am a rule follower in general. Some of us like to follow the rules and some of us don't. I do. In fact I have never had a problem submitting to my government or my employer but for some reason submitting to my husband was a whole different ball game. I am not

a feminist. But I did grow up with this strong sense of independence and the feeling of “not needing a man”. This was mostly because of the home and culture I was raised in as well as sexual trauma. I raise this because each of us need to be aware of how our childhood, past experiences, and our cultures affect the way we view ourselves and how we interact with others especially our spouses. I get how if you have faced physical or sexual abuse just the word submission in and of itself can be triggering but I truly believe that God can heal you from those hurts and you can have a full marriage based on submission to God and to each other if you allow Him the space to do so. Remember the submission we are talking about today is based on love not fear. I struggled with whether or not I should even use the word submission today. Some pastors don't They use honor instead and I get that but when I really studied these scriptures and prayed about what God wanted for us I felt that other words were insufficient. You see Jesus honored God by going to the cross but it was so much more than just that. There was a denying of oneself that is not necessarily captured when we just say honor. Does God want us to honor our spouses? Absolutely but submission goes even further. It is a voluntary choice of selflessness.

After Dustin and I were married, I noticed that when we were walking down a sidewalk he would move to the side that was between me and traffic. Any men here that do that? He thought he was doing what a good husband should do as a sign of protection. I on the other hand did not like it. I took offense. I would say to him, “I walk down the sidewalk all the time by myself and I don't need your help then, so why do you think I need it now. I am perfectly capable of taking care of myself.” Like I said...I can be a fighter! I would walk faster just so he couldn't walk between me and the traffic or I would hold his hand and refuse to let go so he could move to the other side.

We went back and forth about this issue so many times and I couldn't understand why he thought I couldn't walk where I wanted. I thought it made me look weak and I most certainly did not need a man to tell me where to walk. Then God dealt with my heart and gave me wisdom and insight. I had to learn to have consideration. I learned to give careful thought as to why it mattered to my spouse to walk on the outside. Once I

learned to consider how it made him feel and I processed it from his perspective I was able to understand that he was doing it out of a place of love, concern, and respect. He was honoring me and I was not even able to see it because of my own inconsideration. In fact I was devaluing his place in my life by not allowing him to be my protector. I was not showing him respect. In case you didn't know, I am the weaker sex (physically) and today I am ok with that. I would prefer to have Dustin by my side in any dark alley and I am happy and confident to let him walk between me and any danger that he perceives. I feel loved, respected, and treasured when he does these things and I feel that because I learned to submit.

I know this may not be popular and is contrary to current thought but women can I tell you that when I learned (and obviously am continuing to learn) to fully submit in my marriage, I am able to experience a fullness and depth in our relationship that I did not even realize was possible. Many think submitting to your husband means a life of being quiet and only fulfilling his dreams but I found that the more I was able to submit in this biblical context the more he cared about my dreams, my voice, and our future together. That means I am able to pursue a career, step out in whatever area God has called me, and be confident as a wife and mother all while walking in submission to a man that is head over heels in love with me! Can I get an amen?!!!

My example of me and Pastor Dustin in the kayak might seem silly but it allows you to see exactly what the lack of submission actually looks like in our lives. I assure we have faced much more challenging issues (we have 5 kids need I say more?) No matter what the issue is without submission - There is no vision (you need a leader to point out the goal and the plan), without submission there is no unity (if I row on the left and he rows on the right we go around in circles) He needs to be able to lead and know that when he says left I'm gonna go left, and there is no achievement (when I refused to move, we couldn't get anywhere or accomplish anything and this is the same in all marriages where there is no submission) When I choose to submit to Him I am saying let me help you carry the burden, lets run this race together, lets row together to reach our goals.

I want to remind you that submission ultimately leads to salvation. If you are here today and you don't know Christ, you have never fully submitted your life to Him but you want to. You realize that you are lost and you need a savior. If that is you will you please raise you hand? We want to pray with you today. Church lets pray together. Lord I need you. I want to submit my life to you today. I realize I am a sinner in need of a savior. I have chosen my own path but today I submit to your will for my life. I acknowledge that you paid the ultimate price when you died on the cross for my sins. I believe you rose from the dead and that I can spend eternity with you because I choose to believe and accept you as my Lord and Savior. I also realize you have a purpose and a plan for my life. I submit my will to yours and I ask that you help me today to start walking in the plan you have for me. Help me to grow and to learn more about you and help me to make a difference in the lives of those around me. Amen.

Next if you are here today and you are a believer but your spouse is not I want to ask you to come up to the front. We as a church want to support you, to love you, and to encourage you as you walk a life of submission before your spouse. I know it can't be easy because its not easy when your spouse is a believer and so it must be even more difficult to do it alone. But you are never actually alone! I believe this is a promise you can take to prayer every day. Call out the name of your spouse, plead the blood of Jesus over their lives and walk a life of submission through your actions. Church lets circle around our brothers and sisters.

Prayer over marriages with unbelievers.

Last if you are here and you are married to a believer or engaged to a believer I want to ask each of you to join hands and come up here to the front. Pastor Dustin would you please come join me. I believe our marriages are under attack like never before and we want to cover you and your marriage in prayer today. This is the foundation of families. Lives depend on these marriages and Satan would like nothing more but to tear them apart because together they are stronger. Pray for each other every day. Put God at the center of your marriage and submit to each other. Let us pray.

Prayer over marriages of believers.

