

The Christian Family in Biblical Perspective
Seven Essentials in the Christian Family – Essential #3
“Fear-Less Submission And Faith-full Respect:
Showing The Heart Of The Bride Of Christ”
Ephesians 5:21-33, 6:1-4
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May 10, 2009 – Morning Sermon

Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ is where we start. Now why do we start there? Because it is from that word *submit* that the next passage is developed. In fact they even borrow that word *submit* for the next verse.

Ephesians 5:21-6:4 says, **21** *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.* **22** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* **23** *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* **24** *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.* **25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* **26** *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* **27** *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* **28** *In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* **29** *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,* **30** *because we are members of his body.* **31** *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* **32** *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* **33** *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* **6:1** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* **2** *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),* **3** *“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* **4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The grass withers and the flower fades. This is the Word of God, it abides forever, by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

I walked in this morning and it was an interesting moment as I came in. One of the wonderful ladies of this church met me and said, “I just want you to know how much I am enjoying this series.” I said, “Thank you ma’am. I hope you enjoy it after this Sunday.” She said, “What are you preaching?” I said, “It’s on wives submitting to their husbands.” She said, “Oh pastor, how can you do that it’s mother’s day?” With that ringing encouragement I’ll jump right off.

Actually looking at this series as a whole and in general and in two weeks from now when we look at a man’s responsibility toward his wife, I’m kind of calling this “role call” where God is calling us to our Gospel roles as husbands and wives. I have gotten used to watching National Geographic because there’s really not much on TV any more and have any of you ever seen that channel? The one thing I learned from National Geographic is to thank the Lord that I wasn’t born a wildebeest. National Geographic is a cablevision program designed to teach you how many different ways to eat the wildebeest out in the desert.

Just the other week they had a program on there of a salmon going up stream in order to get the next generation and how they have to swim upstream, jump upstream and jump over falls so large you wonder how they are going to get over them, and they go through fall after fall after fall and when they finally get to the last fall that they are to jump up over so that they can mate, nest and bring forth the next generation of salmon, standing at that last fall are bears. There are a bunch of bears standing there and they know these salmon are tired after jumping all the way up there. These bears would just pick those salmon off right out of the air like Johnny Bench did in baseball. It's a whole new definition of picking up supper tonight.

I kind of feel like that for a couple of reasons and the first reason has to do with the largeness of this subject, like in this study I will talk about submission and what the Bible teaches about it and there is so much more to say about it. I want to stop right here and say that we have some wonderful conferences that we offer, Wednesday night seminars on the issue of marriage and family and you will be hearing about some this Spring. Please take advantage of this and go into another level with all of this. Some of the congregational communities could go through some of these books I've recommended that are excellent to use as studies on the family and marriage. We used to depend heavily on the family to hand these things off but we just don't have that anymore like we ought to. So please take some time to do that. It's a large subject and I just feel tired trying to get us up stream but the biggest reason is we are laboring against the culture.

For instance let's look back at Ephesians 5:21 where it says, "*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*" This passage is rooted back in "don't be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit." If you are filled with the Spirit then what marks will you display? You'll speak in tongues and do this and that. No that's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says the evidence of the Holy Spirit is following the will of God and if you follow the will of God then here are the marks of the Spirit filled life. We will be speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We will be making melody in our hearts to the Lord. The third thing we will do is we will be giving thanks for everything for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. The fourth thing is from Ephesians 5:21 where we are going to be submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.

In the kingdom of this world the very impulse of sin is to exalt yourself and God says, "There is coming a day where I will humble you." It is called the Judgment. When you come to Christ, by God's grace, you have a new life and God's grace is shown by humbling yourself and God will exalt us at the right time. When we humble ourselves it's worked out in submission to one another and we are to submit ourselves to one another in the reverence of Christ. What is our action as Christians? We are speaking to one another, we're giving thanks, we're making melody in our hearts to the Lord but we are submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.

Now go to Ephesians 5:22 where it says, "Wives submit..." That word submit is not in the original language. It's grammatically borrowed from the previous verse (Ephesians 5:21), "submitting to one another..." So what is Paul now doing? He is saying, "If our lifestyle is submitting to one another then how does that work out in a marriage, in the family, in government...? So let me lay this out for you. I want wives to submit to their husbands by honoring and respecting them. I want husbands to submit to

their wives by leading them lovingly, leading them sacrificially, loving them sacrificially and leading them as a servant. I want parents to submit to their children by committing to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I want children to submit to their parents by obeying the fifth commandment and honoring, respecting, and obeying their parents.” This becomes countercultural then and its counter cultural now.

First of all, the whole notion of submission is absolutely abhorred in our society. We live in an entitlement society where it’s all about me, what do I have, and exalting me. The notion of submission can only be foisted upon people if we can show you how it will get you what you really want which is something for yourself. Now the Christian embraces this not how I can manipulate people with my submission but out of reverence to Christ I want to submit. I want to submit as a husband. My wife is not there as an object of my youth. She is there as a God given subject of my sacrificial love and leadership. Our children are not there for our self fulfillment. They are there for us out of reverence to Christ to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to the Lord and for the Lord. So this is a whole new way of life. If we are swimming upstream and the culture sits with all its bear traps to grab us, how much more is it when you apply submission to the marital role and we speak of a matter of a wife’s submission to her husband?

I remember the first time I ever preached on this as a pastor in Miami, Florida. I started this series. I talked about husbands, I talked about wives submitting and I was met by one of the elder’s wives. She said, “Harry Reeder, I know you are a new preacher and I know you think you can preach on anything but son, have you thought about this?” I said, “Yes ma’am.” She said, “I want you to know that I believe the Bible and the Bible says for me to submit and my husband’s a head. I believe that but you need to know something.” I said, “What’s that, Ma’am?” She said, “My husband may be the head but I’m the neck and if you want to know where that head is gonna turn just come see me. I’ll tell you.” I said, “I can tell you we have a long way to go here, I believe.” It’s a tough subject to deal with but I want us to understand it not necessarily traditionally, nor reactionary, but let’s understand it Biblically.

What does the Bible have for us here? We are going through seven essentials and essential number one is the Christian lives their life in submission out of reverence for Christ. Essential number two is our marriage is holy ground. Marriage is not a social evolution. It was designed by God and that’s why Paul in Ephesians 5 quotes from Genesis 2:24; “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one.” Marriage is holy ground and a living miracle. It is an actual miracle. What do I mean by that? It’s where a man leaves, cleaves to his wife, holds fast, his wife comes to him and the two shall become one and it’s not because the wife comes over to the husband and joins him or the husband goes over to the wife and joins her or because they meet in the middle. It is because the husband and the wife die to themselves, live unto Christ and they meet in Christ. You have a miracle where one + one = one, not two. If you don’t leave you have one + one = six. If you don’t cleave you have one + one = two. If you want to have a miracle then you die to yourself and you meet as a husband and wife in Christ.

So this is sacred ground, God’s miracle gift in the intimacy in marriage. God designed it and God designed us for it – man and woman made distinctively. Male and female celebrate both equality and diversity. Equality is not interchangeability. We are

different and because we are different God made us different and in the context of marriage, to know the intimacy that is in our heart, to the depth that we desire it, this kind of intimacy cannot be found in any other place. It is emotional, spiritual, physical and sexual and God has designed us and we are not interchangeable parts. We are made different in the image of God to be united together as one.

Now we come to essential number three and that's how we are to live in our marriage. So how are we to live? Essential number three is a Gospel driven and Christ centered husband is unalterable committed to being a servant leader and a sacrificial lover of his own wife AND a Gospel driven and Christ centered wife will insistently pursue fear-less submission and faith-full respect to her own husband. The love and leadership the husband gives in his home is never given to any other woman in any other relationship in any other institution but to their own wife. That special submission and respect that a wife gives to her husband is never given to any other man but to her own husband.

I want to go through a series of questions here. The first question is when Paul is talking about submitting to one another and he begins with marriage which is the most basic relationship in all of humanity, why does the Apostle Paul lay it out this way and say to a husband, "I want you to be a sacrificial lover and a servant leader of your wife"? He says, "I want you to love your wife as Christ loves the church. You are the head of your wife and the head of the church is Jesus." How did Jesus take care of His bride? He laid down His life, He grabbed a towel, He knelt, He served her, He washed her out of that bowl and you are to wash your wife with the water of the Word. Why does He pick that for the man, that servant mark, loving sacrificially, nourishing and cherishing and why does He say to the wife, submit to your own husband?

Ephesians 5:33 says, *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* Why does He call the wife to respect the husband's leadership? He has called the husband to sacrifice and serve. He has said four things to the wife. Number one is that He wants the wife to submit to their own husband. You will give nobody else this kind of submission. Number two the wife is to do this as to the Lord. I want you to make this an act of worship to Me, an act of trust in Me. Thirdly, in the wife's submission she is to image the submission of the church to Christ. I want you to reflect it. I want you to bear witness of it. Number four is the wife is to do this in everything, every area of life. You never live your life with an identity apart from your husband any more than he lives with an identity apart from you. You are one. The way I want you to hold fast to your husband is to submit, be motivated and rooted as to doing as to the Lord, the scope of it is in everything and your attitude is one of respect.

Why does He zero in on this with the husband and the wife? The answers are found in Genesis 2 and 3. In Genesis 2 God made everything and everything He made He said was 'good' except it was not good for the man to be alone. So He caused the man to go into a sleep and then He took from the man's side a rib that He fashioned into a woman, his wife. Genesis 2:18 says, *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a (suitable) helper fit for him."* Adam was made from the dust of the ground which was his origin and Eve's origin is from Adam's side. As she is fashioned, she is fashioned to be a suitable helper, a fit completer of her husband. Remember that word helper.

Genesis 2:21-25 says, **21** *So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* Notice how Eve was not taken from Adam's head so she's not over him. She wasn't taken from his feet so she's not under him. She was taken from his side and then brought as the bride to come along side of him, a helper, completer. She has this completing role where she comes along side of him.

By the way, there will be a second Adam named Jesus. He will have a Bride called the Church. He will purchase His Bride on the cross by His blood which flowed from His side. So His Bride is then brought to Him and He is one with her and she is one with Him. Here in this very first marriage she is brought forth in which we see this in Genesis 2:24, 25. The two become one.

Well, Satan of course attacks. Genesis 3:1-8 says, **1** *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"* (God did not say this, the woman misquotes God) **4** *But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

For the longest time in my just reading the Bible, I would read that passage and then say, "Oh my goodness, Satan sure got Eve over there in the corner and misguided her, deceived her and she ate and went and found Adam and said, "Adam you have to taste this fruit." He ate and now look at the trouble we're in." I went back and read it one day and realized here is the serpent. By the way, Adam had just finished naming the animals, do you think he found a snake that talked? When he saw that serpent talk do you think he should have thought 'I don't think this is right'? He wants peace at home and he just kind of backs out. The leader becomes leaderless and abandons his responsibility. She misquotes God. Adam has already heard that quote. Did he correct her? No. She takes from the tree and ate. Then it says in Genesis 3:6, *she also gave some to her husband **who was with her**, and he ate.* He was with her the whole time. He has abandoned his leadership and she has taken over his leadership. She becomes the provider and the leader and he becomes absent from his responsibility. They fall into sin.

Men, I want to stop here for a moment. This is not called the sin of Eve. We may be irresponsible but God still holds us responsible. This is called the sin of Adam. So now what happens? God brings the curse of sin. Genesis 3:15, 16 says, **15** *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." 16 To the woman he said,*

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

The word ‘desire’ is an interesting Hebrew word. It’s only used three times in the Old Testament. It’s used once here, once in the Song of Solomon and once in Genesis 4. As soon as I say desire a man thinks that’s a great curse because she’s going to desire me. No guys you missed it. The word ‘desire’ here does not mean longing for. The Hebrew translation for this word ‘desire’ is a tough word to translate but it means a compulsion to master and control. In other words, she wants his position. Her desire is for him, who he is, what he’s called to do, that’s her desire.

I want to show you another place it is used that’s even clearer. Do you remember Abel and Cain and their worship to the Lord? Remember how Cain’s offering was not satisfactory. Genesis 4:5-7 says, **5** *but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.* **6** *The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door (a picture of a lion waiting in ambush). Its **desire** is for you, but you must rule (master) over it.”* In other words, sin wants to master you but you must master it. By the way, we can’t master it, praise the Lord Jesus. He gives us the victory over sin but my sin nature is like a lion crouching at the door in ambush and its desire is to master me. But you must master it. You must rule over sin.

That is the way the word ‘desire’ is also meant in Genesis 3:16; *Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.* His response to the wife’s desire to master him and take his position is he will rule over his wife. Again the Hebrew word for ‘rule’ is interesting. It is a verb form of a noun that if you translate the noun can be and many times should be translated tyrant. So take the noun tyrant and turn it into a verb. He shall tyrannize you (his wife). So what has sin brought into marriage? It has brought a curse. The daughters of Eve want to control their husband and his position and men will respond with tyranny, either the tyranny of abandonment in ignoring their wives or even the tyranny of physical violence. These are terrible sins of abusiveness and abandonment. Here is the curse ridden marriage. It is one of conflict.

Paul says praise the Lord for the Gospel. When the Gospel gets hold of a man he will not tyrannize his wife. He will lay down his life for his wife and be a servant leader. He will grab a towel and nothing will be too menial to assist her or encourage her or to move her forward. A woman who gets a hold of the Gospel will say, “I don’t want your position. I’m content in the Lord. I want to complete you and not conquer you. I want to come along side of you and not conflict with you. I want to respect you and not dominate you. That’s what I want to do.” Paul is bringing to bear the power of the Gospel upon relationships, where the curse of sin brings conflict in a marriage Paul is bringing in something totally different in the marriage.

Now why does Paul begin with wife? When we introduce people we generally say, “Hi this is Mr. and Mrs. Smith” so why doesn’t Paul begin with the husband? I think he started with the wife for two reasons. One is because as Paul would later tell Timothy, the woman was first deceived and then led the man into deception so he comes back to reverse the curse by letting the woman see first of all how instead of a daughter of Eve, she can serve the Lord out of reverence, so he is bringing the order of how sin came and now brings the order of how redemption changes the life of this wife. So she is no longer a daughter of Eve.

Secondly, Paul realizes the importance of how a wife brings order into a family. Order, ardor - orderliness in a home and passion in a home. Normally, if I was to say to you, "boy those people in that home just love each other." Who would you think normally instigates a loving home. We usually think that a loving home is because of the wife. There's an orderly home. Daddy must run a tight ship in that home. Actually I don't believe that. I believe order in a home is set by a wife's relationship to her husband. A woman who respects and honors her husband affects the children and everything in the home. She brings order. If she doesn't then her children pick up on what she does and they will not only be disrespectful of their father. They will eventually be disrespectful of her as well. I believe men bring love. I know women bring love and I know men bring order but I'm just saying in terms of the emphasis. When a man loves and pursues sacrificially the well being of his wife it spills right over into the home and into the children. So he is reversing this curse and bringing order and ardor into the home.

So what is submission and what is it not? Let me first tell you what it is not. It's not inferiority. I'm going to pull out of here today and there's a policeman down there. When I get down there he may say to me, "Stop!" Now what will I do? I will stop. I will not stop and say, "I'm smarter than him. I've got more money than him. My parents were this and his parents were that." It's not a matter of inferiority and superiority. It's a matter of orderliness. It's how God made us to function. Therefore I respond with submission to those civil magistrates. It's a matter of God's calling and how I respect those who are in authority over me. I'm going to do it.

Secondly, it's not that a wife can't have opinions or she can't voice her ideas. It's not a call to absolute silence that you can't say a word ever within your life. Thirdly, it's not indentured servitude. The other day I was looking up my genealogy and I was glad that my forbearers that came over were not horse thieves but the second thing I found out was the way we got over here was we were indentured servants. We actually had to sell ourselves to somebody to get passage over here. We had to be their servants for so many years to be able to secure our freedom but submission is not indentured servitude. It's not a voiceless way of life.

It's not resignation to the status quo. In fact I'm going to tell you in closing about a woman named Sarah who had a husband who you would not have liked. His name was Abraham. He was such a dastardly husband that he even lied about her being his wife to save his own skin and was willing for her to be put in a position of possible adultery, not once but twice with Pharaoh and Abimelech. But Sarah would not be moved off of God's Word and Abraham was changed. So submission is not inferiority, it's not indentured servitude and it's not resignation to the status quo.

Fourthly, men, a wife's call to submission is not your ministry. Your ministry is not to put your wife in submission. Your ministry is to lay down your life for your wife and serve your wife. Her job before the Lord is to complete, respect and submit. By the way ladies, it's not the elevation of your husband to the level of the Lord. When you submit as to the Lord it is as a statement of worship and confidence in the Lord. It's not taking your husband and putting him in the position. His will is not equal to the Lord's will. His will may be infallible and if his will ever causes you to disobey God's will then you must obey God. So it's not the elevation of the husband to the place of the Lord.

What are Satan's traps for women from pursuing this Gospel call? The first trap is the culture. A woman doesn't want to be made fun of so she has to decide is the culture's acceptance of me more important than my pleasing God in His Word. The culture brings all kinds of mockery to women who embrace this. In fact, the Christians who embrace submission in all areas of life but to any who embrace this particularly to a wife today, the daughters of Eve will bring mockery.

A second trap Satan will use is the manipulation of fear. There will be a fear of the world, of your husband, of a loss of control and of course you have that old impulse of Eve within you. That trap is always wanting to step up, take control and take his position.

A third trap is that the wife is married to a sinner. How can I be submissive to a sinner? So what do I do? There was a woman who was faced with this and her name was Sarah. The Apostle Peter who like Paul calls us to submission as a way of life in 1 Peter 2. Then in 1 Peter 3 he applies it to husbands and wives. Men, I would love for you to read 1 Peter 3:7 and meditate on it for the next two weeks. 1 Peter 3:1-6 says, *1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. 5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

In 1 Peter 3:1 notice that my husband is a sinner and what is my response? Is it to give up on submission? No, submission actually becomes the instrument to which you win him to the Word. Verse 2 is why I am a Christian today, humanly speaking. In Cindy, my wife, I saw something I didn't have and no matter what I did I couldn't shake her. I said, "I need that" and I was brought to Christ. Here is this behavior of life that is so solid and stable in the Lord that it wins a wayward husband. Some people say of verse 3 that it says women can't wear gold jewelry. Is the verse also telling you not to wear clothes? No, its saying don't be preoccupied with the external, go inside. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain and there's coming a day that you won't have enough jewelry and enough anything. But the beauty of the heart will still shine through powerfully. So focus on the beauty of the internal. The last part of those verses in 1 Peter 3 points out fear less submission and faith full respect.

How do holy women get there? First of all you have to be set apart to the Lord. Secondly, it is holy women who hoped in God. Ladies, you can never embrace this way of life if your hope is any where other than in the Lord. If your hope is in your husband you won't be able to do it. If your hope is in marriage you won't be able to do it. If your hope is in money, society or this world you won't be able to do it. These women live fear-lessly and faith-fully because there hope was in God. Therefore they could not be moved, therefore this completer, helper.

Ladies, did you know your calling is actually one of God's names? He made Eve, He made you in marriage to be the helper, completer. Do you remember when Jesus was ready to go to the Father and the disciples didn't want Him to go? Jesus said, "I must go

so that when I go I shall send to you another Helper.” Who was He talking about? It’s the Holy Spirit. By the way, what’s the name of the other Helper? Jesus is the other Helper. Helper is another name for Jesus and Helper is the name for the Holy Spirit and you bear their image. This isn’t something to disdain. This is holy ground. You bear the image testimony of the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ, the Completer, the Helper. It’s not the conflictor, not the competitor but the one who comes along side, the completer. Holy ground is this obedience to God’s call.

Here is my takeaway. Long before I became pastor of this church I came across this book that was written by one of the elder’s wives of Briarwood, Emalyn Spencer titled A Woman that Feareth the Lord. We disciplined our daughters with this book. You can’t be a mother without being a Godly wife and a Godly wife needs to be a Godly woman who is not frightened by any fear. Who are those women who are not frightened by any fear? They are those who hope in God. Who are those who hope in God? They fear the Lord. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30).

I don’t think I would just go read Proverbs 31 because that woman has got an “S” on her T-shirt for Superwoman. She’s a real estate agent, she has a business, she makes clothes, she sells things and she never competes with her husband. In fact, he is honored in the gates. Her children bless her. She enhances the family. This has to be a composition of ten women. She is unbelievable. I love the fact that she is not frightened by any fear. Do you remember what we read earlier? Strength and dignity are her clothing. She looks to the future and laughs. Her hope is in the Lord.

Here is my call from the Lord. This is a divine call. Ladies, embrace it. Bring your husbands back in two weeks. Show up and complete them as they are here. I want to speak to them but here’s what I want to tell you. Your submission, helper, completer role is a demonstration of your commitment to the Lord of glory who has saved you from your sins and you care not what the world says or whether this works or not but out of reverence to Christ you want to tell the Lord, “I love You and I will follow Your design. I will follow the Gospel that will transform my marriage. I trust You and out of that I want to encourage my husband.”

Do you know what happens when a woman comes along side of her husband? It calls him, it challenges him, it encourages him, and it shows him. Listen, if you take his place he’ll have 30,000 reasons why he is not the man he ought to be in the home. But when you come along side of him then all of a sudden he has to deal with the Lord.

My first student pastorate was in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I have told you this story before about a woman named Ruth who was a saint at Lookout Valley. On Mother’s Day she brought her son who was a college athlete, who hated Christianity and hated the church and preachers, to our church. She told me, “He’s going to come to church today for me, preacher, now you save him.” I said, “Ma’am I just don’t think I can do that.” He came, he got mad, he turned the chair around and stared at me, walked out and wouldn’t shake my hand. At two o’clock that afternoon he roars up on a Harley motorcycle outside our home and screeches to a halt. He beats on the door and I said to Cindy, “He’s at the door and I’m going to the door but I may not be back.” I opened the door and he was weeping, in tears, wanting to become a Christian. Boy, she was really encouraged then.

Ruth was now going to work on her husband who was known as “the recalcitrant” of the Valley. She was the saint and now her son was saved and she wanted to go get her husband. She started inviting Cindy and I over to eat with them. I could tell he wasn’t all that happy about me being there. He wasn’t happy about being married to saint Ruth because he felt everybody looked down on him. I wish I could tell you I was brilliant about this but I just happened to do it one day. We were over their house for a Thanksgiving dinner. He was talking to me about hunting which I knew nothing about except that I was about to eat a deer for Thanksgiving that he had killed. We were talking back and forth and Ruth says, “It’s time to eat” so we all go to the table. She said, “Preacher, pray for us.” I don’t know why but I didn’t do it. Then she looked at me again and said, “Preacher, pray for us!” I didn’t do it and she said, “Preacher are you going to pray for us or not?” I looked at James, her husband, and said, “Would you like for me to pray at your table?” You wouldn’t believe the grin I got and it was the first time I recognized that he would breathe. His nickname was squeaky because of his voice and in that squeaky voice he said, “Preacher, that’s a great idea, you pray for us today and by the way give thanks.” I said, “Absolutely I will” and I prayed. Sunday he was at church. One month later he committed his life to Christ. His wife’s submission began to win him.

She talked to me afterwards and said, “Why did you do that at the dinner table?” I said, “Why don’t we begin to respect him. Let’s don’t act like he’s not there. Let’s respect him.” Boy she took it to a whole other level. The next thing I know he’s in church, then he becomes a Christian. His occupation was that of being a mechanic and five years later the garage door at his shop fell on his head and he ended up dying from that injury. Now he’s in heaven.

Women who fear the Lord are fear less in submission. They’re hope is in God. Watch what happens when we honor the Lord because we love Him. Let the world see Christ and His bride and the bride’s love for her Savior in your respect, completion and helping of your husband. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. God this deserves so much more treatment. I thank You for the conferences, seminars, the study groups, the congregational communities and small groups that can go much further and much deeper with this, but O God start in our hearts right now. Lord, I want to pray for the women in this church and the single women who are growing up and learning to adorn themselves with the Gospel from the heart, and wives and mothers who are saying to the Lord with confidence in my Savior as a statement of worship “I’m going to follow Your Word and be a helper completer.” O God I pray You transform by the Gospel our very lives, our marriages and our homes as we trust in You, walk in obedience. I thank You for these women and on this Mother’s Day I thank You for these mothers. Father, for all of us here we thank You but O God, remove the daughters of Eve and its curse and raise up the daughters of Sarah, fear less, faith full, for Christ’s sake, Amen.