

The Christian Wife (2): Gospel Submission

Colossians 3:18

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Colossians 3:18-25, the Word of God reads, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality."

Father in heaven, we come before You again this morning, asking that You would send the Holy Spirit to help us, Lord, to hear, to understand, to open the eyes of our understanding, to receive the Word of God with cheerfulness, with gladness, and with humility of heart. I pray, Lord, that You would help me to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit, that Your people will be built up, encouraged, grounded, edified in the faith, Lord, drawing nearer to You and being more obedient to Your word and to Your commandments. And we ask these things for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. Amen.

Well, we've been going through our series on the family through the book of Colossians, and last week we considered verse 18 of Colossians 3, which says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." But as I was speaking, I realized that I wasn't able to finish what I had prepared, and so I had to cut short halfway through, and I thought I would pick it up again this week. So, ladies, if it feels like you're getting a double whammy, it's okay; be gracious and patient with me. But in the Lord's providence, we are here again in verse 18.

Last week, we considered what submission is, the qualities of heart and the Christian graces that are important for a woman to have in order for her to display proper submission, such as humility and willingness, among other things. We also considered what submission is not. It is just as important to understand what submission is as it is to understand what it

is not. We must have the right parameters, biblical parameters, for God's expectations of a wife's submission to her husband. We looked at that last week and even considered when a wife should not obey her husband. If you have not yet listened to that sermon, I encourage you to do so.

Today, we will continue in this text of Scripture, moving into Ephesians 5, where we will predominantly remain. Up until this point, we have been looking at what the Word of God teaches in Colossians concerning marriage and a wife's submission to her husband. But what we have to realize is that many of the principles that we have considered are not distinctively Christian. What I mean by that is this: you might find a consensus amongst even other religions in the world that would agree somewhat with what has already been said. Maybe not entirely, particularly my statements about Jesus being Lord and those commandments come from Him. But I'm just talking about the principles. How many religions in the world teach that a wife should submit to her husband and the husband is to lead the family and these kind of concepts? But what happens in Ephesians chapter 5 and even in Colossians in its context, is that Paul makes a successful marriage distinctively Christian. He brings out this analogy of Christ and the church and makes it the ground of our obedience and our taking up of our roles and going on from there. I mean, we can all affirm there are other religions in the world that confirm that God is Creator. There are other religions in the world that confirm that He created order. But not every religion in the world can confirm that it is by the example of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection and His laying down of Himself that ought to be the foundation and basis upon which the family is to run and continue. And so it's important to realize that.

And why do I say this? It's because we don't want to fall in our marriages into legalistic moralism. The generations that have passed us, even though Christian, sometimes you may wonder whether or not this was just legalism and moralism, just a ticking off of the boxes, or whether it was really seeking to embrace the gospel and the applications of the gospel in the Christian home. And what Ephesians 5 does is it helps us see that marriage and the family is not just rooted in the created order, but beyond this, it reflects the great picture of the gospel which is to shape the motivations and the thinking of God's people. And it's important that we come into marriage understanding that very thing as Christians. That the power of a successful marriage lies within the understanding of the cross of Jesus Christ. It lies within the understanding of the church's relationship to her Lord and the Lord's relationship to His church.

Now, why does Paul bring out an analogy? Well, analogies are powerful means that communicate more effectively truths. Commandments give clarity, give force, give strength, and give meaning, and help us with a fuller

understanding. But what's also interesting is that in Ephesians chapter 5, just like in Colossians, and there's a lot of parallels there, we're up to the practical part of the epistle, like Colossians is. And what Paul does here is he stops going into the practical, or in the midst of his practical, should I say, he goes back into doctrine again. Now, why is Paul doing this? Why is Paul, in his practical section, can't disconnect himself from doctrine? Because he understands that successful obedience and practice is rooted in biblical doctrine. And if we have practice without doctrine, we have moralism, we have legalism, and we do not have the right motivations by which we should be driven in our obedience for Jesus Christ.

And so, Paul is always concerned with doctrine, and I think it's important to realize that when we come to texts like this, it's not like just tell me what to do. More than that, why should you do what you should do? Doctrine will explain that, elaborate on that, help you see the power that underlies the commandment, the reason for the commandment, and the example set before us in the Lord Jesus Christ. He doesn't want Christian marriages to be simply moralistic, but rather gospel-centered, transformative marriages that come from a right understanding.

And so, I want to spend some time dealing with the analogy and then how it applies specifically to the wives, and then next week we'll get into the husbands, the section on the husbands. Let's consider this analogy just briefly in Ephesians 5:22, as was read for us this morning, and verse number 33. And just by way of surveying, we find some key verses. Verse 23 says, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body." And then you have verse 24, where you have the church's subjection as wife, so we have the husband as head, as Christ is head of the church. But in verse 24, you have, "Just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." And so, you have the husband as head, as Christ is head of the church, then you also have this other parallel here, where the church is likened to the wife who is subject to her head.

And then in verse 25, you have Christ's supreme love demonstrated to His bride, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." And here we see that Christ demonstrates His love for His church in His death, but look at verse 28, He also demonstrates His love for His bride in His life. We see in verse 28, "So husbands ought to love their own wives even as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." So He dies to redeem her, He lays down His life for her, but in His resurrection life, He also ministers to her and nourishes her and cherishes her as part of His body. And so, we see that this analogy really is a beautiful example to us of how Christ

relates to His church and how the church will relate to Christ.

But then go down to verse 30 to 32, and this is where it kind of reaches its climax and helps us understand the significance of this. It says, "For we are members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Now, what is very interesting here is that Paul shows not only Christ as husbands being as Christ and the wives being as the church, and that there's a head and that there's a body, and there's leadership and there's submission, but he goes beyond that and quotes for us Genesis 2:24 and ties this all the way back to the creative order. And he says the church is bone of Christ's bones and flesh of His flesh, and in the same way, the wife is bone of his bones, Adam's bone. Eve was out of Adam's bones and flesh of his flesh. What he's simply saying is that this commandment, this example, this analogy is all rooted in this one truth, this covenantal union that exists between Christ and His bride, and that is the basis of every marriage, that there is a covenantal union that should be honored and respected, as we considered several weeks ago. And this analogy helps us to see the importance of Christ and His church.

Now, let me just elaborate on the imagery a little bit more to help us see it. Here's the image that Paul is trying to convey in the analogy. He presents Christ as the one who was fulfilling the will of the Father in love for His bride. Christ leaves the Father's house, He takes on humanity in humility, and is joined in vital union with His bride, the church. Christ sheds His own blood as a dowry or payment or as a purchase for her redemption, for her cleansing. And then Christ, being her Savior, nourishes her, cherishes her. He, Christ, is her head; she is His body. He leads her as head; she submits to Him as the head. He corrects her, He teaches her, He shepherds her, He loves her, He cares for her. The whole union that exists between Christ and the church is a one-flesh union. The church is His body, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, just as Eve was Adam's bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and just like in our marriages, our wives are bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh.

And just as Eve was taken from the side of Adam who slept, so the church was brought forth from the side, the bleeding side, of the Son of God who bled with new covenant mercy for her redemption, purchased her for Himself. And not only did He lay in the sleep of death and produce the church through His death, but in His resurrection life, she receives life and she continues to live and move and have her union with Him. She bears fruit

unto God from this relationship. She's not the head; she's the body. The church is not the head of Christ; Christ is the head of the church.

And just as the church serves Jesus Christ and helps fulfill His purposes as a companion to Christ and an ambassador for Christ, helping fulfill the purposes of Christ's redemption in the world through the gospel, so the wife supports the husband in his endeavors to lead the home and to fulfill the creation mandate which God has called him to do and God has called them to do together. But she is a helper. You see, it's important to realize that just as Adam and Eve, it was said of them what Christ said of Adam and Eve, that what God has joined together, let not man put asunder or let not man separate. So it is said of the church and Christ, for who shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ? You see, this union is an eternal covenantal union between Christ and His bride, which every marriage should rightly reflect. And it's in that union that the church brings forth fruit unto God. It is in the union of husband and wife that they bring forth fruit and replenish the earth. And Romans 7:4 reflects that.

As we were singing just before the sermon, the hymn says, "From heaven He came and sought her, to be His holy bride; with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died." You see, what we're understanding here is that this analogy runs deeper, and it touches the very heart of the Christian faith. It touches at the very heart of Christian doctrine. It touches at the very heart of why we are who we are and how we've been changed and made anew. And its meaning is so significant to us because it is in this new union that we have with Christ that we serve Him, love Him, and work in harmonious union and relationship together, understanding that He is head and we are the body. But it's in the same union that should be reflected in marriages, that a husband and wife are joined together, that the wife should also do the same for her husband, and the husband ought to also do the same for his wife.

You know what this tells us? That your marriage is bigger and more glorious than you ever imagined. You know, when you wake up in the morning and you've been frustrated or something's going on, you don't think your marriage means much in those periods of times when there's contentions and when there's fighting, and when there's wars. But I want you to stop and think of your marriage as portraying the union between Christ and the church, a one-flesh union, a union that should rightly reflect Christ and His bride. Think about it that way, that your marriage is reflecting the most glorious, the greatest truth and picture this side of eternity, or for all eternity even. Because even at the final day, and when there are new heavens and a new earth, we're going to sing the praises of that union. We're going to sing the praises of that love. We're going to sing the praises of Him who laid down His life for us as His church. We're going to have the

great marriage supper of the Lamb, and we're going to rejoice forever in our union with Him.

And what Paul's trying to help us understand is that as Christians, as we live our lives in this world with our husbands and wives, this is not a secondary issue; this is fundamental. This is wonderful, this is glorious, this is amazing. This is something that is bigger and more glorious than you and your preferences or you and your little frustrations. This is about Christ and His church. This is about the glory of the Son of God and the magnifying of His name. And Paul wants the church to realize that their marriages are not about these little insignificant fightings and contentions here on this earthly level, but they are representing something far greater, far better, and they should live with that goal in mind: to magnify the name of the Son of God.

So how does this apply then to the wives in particular? Well, it's simply this: If you realize that you are, as the church is to Christ, you will understand that our life is not about our rights or having our ways or the fulfilling of our plans or the successes of our ambitions. You'd realize that you, as a woman, as the church was sought after by God, so you, as a woman, are one who has been sought after and one who belongs to another. You see, the church is not her own; she's been bought with a price. And in the same way, in this covenantal union as a wife, you belong to your head, as the body belongs to the head. And so it changes the dynamic of the relationship, realizing that my marriage should reflect that union rather than independence. It should reflect a unity, not a disunity, just as Christ and the church. You see, my identity should be wrapped up in my head, just as for Eve it was with Adam, that she bore his name, and just like the church as she bears her Savior's name. And so, in the same manner, as a wife, you bear the name of your husband, and you are joined together as one.

The church lives her days to please and to assist the work of the gospel and please the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the same is for the wife, that she's to help and support, and she should do him good and not evil all the days of his life toward her husband. Now, this she does, as we've mentioned last week, she does it as unto Christ. But you cannot do it unto Christ if you do not understand the mystery, if you do not understand the glory of this mystery. You see, it's only as we, having repented of our sins and have believed in Jesus Christ, that our eyes are open to see, to understand, to know that this is a great mystery. This is a glorious thing that our salvation has been procured by the Son of God. We have been bought by Him, saved by Him, redeemed by Him, and therefore we belong to Him.

You see, in the world, people have this idea that we are our own and we do what we want when we want, and no one can tell us what to do. But in

the Christian Church, it's quite the opposite. In the Christian Church, we realize that we are not our own, that we've been bought with a price, and that it's not about our fulfilling of our own purposes but our submission to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, what I'm simply trying to say to you is, unless you understand and see the gospel in all its glory and have tasted of the goodness of God who has laid down His life for you and have received His mercy, you will never know and you'll never understand what it means to humbly submit yourself to the head of your family, namely your husband.

And I say this quite seriously that no Christian should ever entertain the idea of marriage, and no sister should ever entertain the idea of marriage until she first has this deep conviction that she understands that the priority of her relationship is to prioritize her home and to prioritize her husband. She understands God's order, she understands the ideas of Christ and His bride, that she was made from man for man as a helper to man. These are very, very important truths that women need to comprehend and understand. And sisters, if you're single, before you get married, understand that if you enter into marriage, you're entering into this to display this glorious picture in your relationship toward your husband.

You see, for many women today, it's about being successful in their career and being head and shoulders above their career. For many women, it's about their social engagements, and as long as they can keep up with all their friends and do everything that they want to do, and if they can't catch up with their friends because the kids are getting in the way or because their husband wants to spend time with them, you're cramping my style, you're ruining my friendships. Even for some women, they exalt ministry, that I'm serving God, and therefore, in their service for God, they do not serve their husbands. Look, if we don't understand that this is a picture of Christ and His bride and Christ and His church, you will prioritize this relationship above all others. You will realize that besides your relationship to Jesus Christ, your relationship to your husband is paramount, and therefore, you will live not thinking that this is an inferior role or an inferior relationship, but you would see this as a glorious relationship far above all your other engagements.

So, as a wife, then how should I submit myself to my husband? Well, verse number 23 and 24 speaks to that in Ephesians chapter 5. How should I then submit myself to my husband? Well, verse 24, we'll start with the end part of verse 24, it says, "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Now, as I said, listening to last week's sermon will help you understand what Charles Hodge says here. It teaches its extent; the "everything" teaches its extent, not its degree. It extends over all departments but is limited in all. We understand

that the limitations of a woman's submission are that she must submit to Christ, her head, the head of heads, first and foremost, and that she ought to obey God rather than man when it comes to contradictory commandments. However, this is still very extensive. The word "everything" is very, very extensive. It covers everything, and I think that's important to realize.

So, how am I to submit to my husband? Well, first and foremost, do not compartmentalize your submission to your husband. Realize that your husband is head over the wife and that your submission ought to be extensive. And let me explain, it happens. There's a lot of compartmentalizing in marriage relationships today, and basically, that's what a woman might think in her heart, even though she may not say this, that I will submit to my husband when it comes to matters of finance and when it comes to matters of budget. That's okay, hon, you can manage the financials and the budget, that's fine, that's your sphere of authority, but don't tell me about my relationships with my friends if you're concerned about perhaps one of my friends that might be influencing me, infecting me with wrong things, or may not be a good influence on me. Don't be telling me about what to do with the children. I'm Mama Bear, Mama Bear is the final authority in matters of children. And I'm not saying that the wife shouldn't manage the household; the Bible teaches that she should. But her authority, even in relationship to the children, is under her head, which is her husband. And therefore, she is not acting independently from him, but she's not compartmentalizing her submission and saying, "In this sphere, don't tell me what to do, but in this sphere, I'll listen to you. I'll listen to you when we're talking about budgeting or when it comes to whatever's happening here on thing, but don't tell us what to do or who to have over for dinner, that's my domain." I think that's a very wrong way of looking at it.

The Bible is very clear about this: it is to be an extensive submission, that she is to submit herself to her husband in everything. And therefore, just as the church subjects herself to Christ in everything, so the wife should see that she submits to her husband extensively also. That's a pretty hard thing to grapple with, especially when your husband, you may not feel, is like someone who's worthy of such submission. But I am to remind you of what I said last week: that our submission is unto the Lord ultimately, and that your submission to your husband only reflects this glorious picture of Christ and His bride.

It's important that the wife understands that she is to submit herself in everything and not measure her husband according to his gifts and abilities and assign to him submission in the areas that she's confident that he can lead him, but in all the areas that she's not confident that he cannot lead him, she's going to take control and manipulate to make sure that her will is done and not the will of her husband. That is against the will of God.

As I said, appeals can be made, yes, as I said, she can influence her husband most definitely, but she ought not to usurp her husband's authority. And more than that, she should be understanding that God expects me to submit in everything.

That's a very important thing to grasp and to get in our minds. As soon as we start to compartmentalize these things, we're in for a lot of trouble. It's only a matter of days and months before there's a contention about a certain issue that arises, and you simply say, "No, no, I'm not going to go any further there," and there are fights and contentions in the home. And so, there's the extensive nature of the submission.

But also, in verse number 23, we see that there's not only the extensive nature of the submission, but it's a right manner in which she is to submit herself. It says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body." Verse 24, sorry, it says, "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husband." Now, this word "as" shows us a simile between the church's subjection to Christ and the wife's subjection to her husband. So that, in answer to the question, "How then am I to submit myself?" well, we've heard it said before, we submit yourself as the church.

We've heard it said before, we ask the question, we're in a straight and narrow straight of what to do, we ask WWJD, what would Jesus do? Good question, don't throw it away, it's perfect. But in the marriage relationship, there's a "what should the church do" that applies to the wife here. When you're stuck in a strait and you're caught in a situation where you feel like, "I don't know what to do right now with my husband. He wants to go this way, and I want to go this way. What am I to do?" Well, you ask yourself this question: what should the church do? Because it says here in Ephesians 5:24 that just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. And I think a good thing for a wife to do consistently is to ask herself, "How is it that the church is to be subjected to Christ?"

We all have a lot of opinions on how Christians should live. We all have a lot of verses that we can show of people not living the way that they should live. But if we begin to apply it here, we begin at a good spot. The church's submission to Christ is firstly voluntary. She obeys Him out of love for Him. She yields herself in submission to Him voluntarily. She also does it wholeheartedly. We understand that a halfhearted submission in the Christian church is hardly a submission at all, and that Christ is not glorified and praised by a halfhearted submission. Our service for Jesus should be wholehearted.

We understand that in our service for Christ, we ought to be cheerful, that we ought to be a people filled with respect towards His commandments, respect towards His desires. We should not be ill or insincere in our obedience to Jesus Christ. We're not serving Jesus to know what we can get from Jesus, but we serve Jesus because of Jesus, because we know our relationship toward Him. And in the same manner, also the wife serves the husband, knowing that God has joined her to him in covenantal union.

When we think of our service to Christ, should it not be consistent? You know, we often think of Christians that are a part of the Christian church that are inconsistent with their walk with God, the hit-and-miss in their fellowship with God, hit-and-miss in their service toward God and evangelism, and in whatever they're meant to be doing in their praying and reading and following Jesus Christ and submitting to His commandments. And we say, "That's not right. We need to be consistent." So, in like manner, the wife also ought to be consistent in her submission to her husband.

How much slothfulness is acceptable in the church's relationship to Jesus Christ? How much delay is allowed in our relationship with Christ in not heeding His commandments and obeying Him when we know the right thing that we should do? Is it appropriate for the church to belittle His word? Should we give God attitude? Should we pout and murmur when He expects us to do things that He has called us to do? As I said before, I say again: should we not be seeking to do Him good and not evil all the days of His life? And in the same manner in which the church displays her faithfulness to Christ and her love to Christ, so the wife, if she truly is faithful and loving to her husband, should display the same type of submission and subjection that the church displays to her Lord Jesus Christ.

Titus 2 makes a major point of this: that wives are to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands. But it basically says that if they don't be obedient to their husbands, if they are not good, if they're not homemakers, if they're not chaste, if they're not discreet, the result of that is the blaspheming of the Word of God. And in verse number 10, the passage also goes on to say that all Christians' obedience is similar to that, and he tells us that we are to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, meaning we should dress, decorate, display, and beautify the doctrine of our God and of our Savior.

Realize this: in your submission to your husband, you are beautifying the analogy; you are magnifying the analogy; you are magnifying Christ and His church, magnifying the church's relationship to her Lord. But a failure to submit yourself to your husband results in the opposite of that: the blaspheming of the Word of God.

So, what I'm simply trying to say is this: the gospel of Jesus Christ is often brought into disrepute because of the marriages of many of God's people. But also, the opposite is equally true: the praises of the gospel are sounded out by godly marriages. You know, there are so many opportunities in this world for the proclamation of Jesus Christ through a faithful marriage that we should take advantage of that and see to it that our marriages reflect that.

Let me give an example. We looked at several weeks ago the statistics that showed the breakdown in the Australian family and how the divorce rates and all the rest of it throughout this land. And we also know, as Christians, that unbelievers, whenever they are in a failure in their lives, what is the first thing that they do? They start looking to justify their conduct, their behavior. And then, if we've all experienced that before, haven't we? We realize that unbelievers are watching the believers, in particular, they're meant to be the prime example of morality, godliness, and holiness.

And so, when an unbeliever falls in his marriage relationship and he fails in his marriage relationship, which is such a common occurrence, his eyes start to survey all his friends, he starts to survey all his workmates and colleagues, and seeks to perhaps justify himself by looking to that marriage. That's why you have these workplace jokes all the time about the wives, about the husbands. It's all like this big joke and comedy because, you know, the truth is people are struggling in their marriages, people are failing in their marriages, and they want to make light of the very thing that they are struggling with to justify the conscience that is condemning them because they are failing to love their wives and the wives are failing to submit to their husbands.

But this is a prime opportunity for the Christian to speak by his life and by his lips to the glorious testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When your work colleagues see you not participating in those jokes against your wife and they perhaps ask why or they're awkward, you can say, "My wife's nothing like what you're saying she is or what your wife is. My wife loves the Lord Jesus Christ." They see that your wife is loving and kind, and he might say to you, "I can never get my wife to do anything for me. Every time I ask her something, it's World War Three. But your wife, she packs your lunches, you know, or whatever it may be." And you can say, "Yeah, well, she's doing this as unto the Lord."

These are opportunities for you to speak to the highest and glorious, wonderful picture of a marriage which is failing in their lives but should be happening in your lives. This is a prime time for the gospel, that these opportunities will arise, that in this submission we can speak of the church's submission to Christ. In the love that a husband shows to his wife, they

can see that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. You see, the marriage goal is to serve the gospel, ultimately to serve the glories of the gospel of Jesus Christ, not our own ends.

You know, this is something that we, as Christians, really ought to lay hold of, realizing that when I allow myself to nag, complain, fight, put my heels in the ground, bring tension into my home, create antagonism in my family relationships, I am bringing the gospel into disrepute, and I am not reflecting that right image that should be there. And therefore, my testimony for Christ begins to fail.

R.C. Lucas once said these challenging words: "There is no possibility of a married woman's surrender to a heavenly Christ which is not made visible and actual by some submission to an earthly husband." You may pray, read your Bible, do good deeds, help others in their relationships, and even be concerned for the holiness of God's Church and the righteousness of those around you. However, my friends, it all begins right here at this altar. There is no true love for Jesus Christ if there is no practical application of it in our own lives.

I am not talking about perfect obedience, as we all have failings and shortcomings. What I am trying to say is that you cannot live in tension with your spouse and think that you are not in tension with your Lord. I Peter 3:7 says these things very clearly: that your prayers be not hindered. You are to be heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. And it's a false comprehension of true spirituality when we think that we can go on in disobedience to our spouse, disrespecting our wife or our wife disrespecting the husband, and not caring for one another and loving one another, and go on reading the Bible and praying as if everything is fine with our relationship with God. It is not fine.

It's the husband's duty to guard the headship of the husband. It's the wife's duty to support the headship of the husband. She should defer to him. The children in our household should understand that it's the dad who makes the final decision. The children under our roof should understand that dad has the final say. That mom talks to dad, dad talks to mom, they communicate, they don't fight about things, but ultimately the final decision is made by the head of the home.

But when your children see you kick against your husband, they will copy you and kick against his authority also. The Bible is very clear that a contentious and unsubmitive spirit only drives the husband and wife relationship further away from each other. The contentions of a wife are like a continual dropping. It's better to be on the rooftop of a house than to be in the same house with a contentious wife. It's better to flee into the

desert. By the way, this is not a commendation for the man who does flee; we'll get to that in the next week. This is not saying you may flee; this is just simply saying that when a wife produces contention in the home and does not submit to her husband's authority, he doesn't want to be there. He doesn't want to be around. There's a tension that he doesn't want to experience. It's already hard for him in many cases to lead; he doesn't want to have to lead and fight all the way through that relationship.

The Proverbs are so clear on this, that it goes as far as to say that an excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes him shame is rottenness to his bones. Very strong words from the Word of God. But the excellence of a wife is not measured by her abilities; it's measured here by the way that she relates to her husband. And this is an important measure of the excellence of a wife.

The Bible is so clear that it's a woman who fears the Lord who shall be praised. It is not the expensive garments from which you will receive your praise. It will not be the popularity of your friendships or the climbing of the corporate ladder that will earn you praise before God. What will earn you the praise of your husband and the praise of God will be your faithful submission and your obedience to what the Word of God teaches: being a virtuous wife who works hard and diligently to support and to strengthen the very home that God has created, the very home that God has brought you into with your husband in union, from which you have your offspring.

So my encouragement to you, sisters, is to fear the Lord, love Him, serve Him, because He bled and died for your salvation. He has forgiven you all your trespasses. Therefore, cling to Christ, cling to His glorious redemption, and embrace Christian submission as a reflection of the power of that gospel that has so transformed your life. Let us pray.