

Good morning. My name is Blake Chilton. I am the student pastor here at the Village, and I have been married about eight years. I have three kids. I know that surprises some of you because I look about seventeen. I have been married about eight years and when I got married, I had this real weird idea of what marriage was going to be like. I don't know where I got this but I just had some very bad assumptions. I thought that in marriage you would just walk in this euphoric bliss and you just kind of move about and everything is fluttering about and there is theme music going on the whole time.

I thought the little bluebird alights on your shoulder and your wife and you just have this great relationship and you always talk really sweet to one another and it is just this really weird deal that I had no idea how it got to be that way. As I was growing up, I watched my parents' marriage. They have been married thirty years now. But I never got to see them fight, and I don't know that is where I got that from. And it wasn't from my dating relationship, because I was not the best dater. It's not like I would break up with girls and they would be like, "I'm just going to miss you so much. You are just such a great boyfriend." That didn't happen. They were usually the ones breaking up with me. So I don't know where I got this idea, but it was off. And if you have been married for any time at all, you know that that is really not how marriage is at all. Marriage is difficult. And I know you may not have heard that at church, but it is true. And you may not have heard that from a pastor before, but marriage is difficult. Marriage is tough. But the good thing about this is that God has ordained marriage, so it is not like we are out of His will. Not only has He ordained marriage, He has given us some biblical principles to follow in order for us to have a beautiful marriage.

So that is where I want to go this morning with you. So if you will turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3. Some of our staff were making fun of me about doing this passage. Chandler always talks about how we teach through the Bible expositively so that we do not skip tough text. But here I am, I get to preach about twice a year and I pick a tough text. So I am warning you that this is not going to be easy at times. So just stay with me, and we will make it through hopefully and I won't get stoned. 1 Peter 3, starting in verse 1. It says "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands" or "submit to your husbands." See, I told you. We are just diving right into this thing. The reason he says, "likewise" is because of what's in the earlier chapter. You always have to read Scripture in the context of what has already been stated. You can't just read one verse and go, "Well, that's what that means." You have to know and understand what the author was talking about previously. If you look up in 1 Peter 2 starting in verse 13, there is this idea of authority and that we should be subject, we should submit to the governing authorities. That is why we drive the speed limit, we don't rob peoples' houses or knock off the Circle K or stuff like that. We are trying to submit to the governing authorities and do what they have called us to do so that we live and orderly life. So then he keeps going down and he talks about slaves in verse 18. "Slaves, subject yourselves to your masters."

That is like you at your place of employment. You submit to your boss. Otherwise, you are looking for another job in a really bad economy. So there is this whole idea of submission authority. And it is not just here in government things or your employer, but it is also in the home. And if you look through Scripture, God has laid out this idea, this hierarchy of authority all throughout creation. You look back in Genesis and He says, "Hey, the animals will submit to mankind." And then He moves on and He says, "Hey, I'm going to set up a church where you will have elders and you will have pastors and the people of the church should submit to their leadership." A lot of people don't like to hear that, but its biblical. And even within the home, you keep coming down to Ephesians 5. It says, "Children submit yourselves to your parents."

You obey your parents. And then He gives this example, "Wives submit yourselves, subject yourselves to your husband." And he is saying, "This is how I have created the world to function best. This is the way I have created the world to work properly where there is not chaos, where there is order." There has got to be a leader.

So let's keep going and see what this is talking about. "Wives submit yourselves, subject yourselves to your own husband." Now this is not saying, "Women, submit to men everywhere." That is not what the Bible is saying. The Bible is saying, "You submit, you subject yourself to your own husband. When you came down that aisle and came before the altar, you essentially came under his headship, his leadership." And we are going to get to the men in a little bit on what that means. But you subject yourselves to their authority. Women, men, children, it doesn't matter, nobody really likes this idea of submitting to authority. There is something when you hear this. It just kind of grates at you. You are like, "Oh, I have to submit to my boss, to submit to the government? Why can't I go forty in a school zone?" And you are thinking all these things and you are like, "There is just something wrong with that. There's something weird about that." And it really comes from back in the fall. It is in our sinful nature that we just don't like authority. It is not just women, it's not just men; it's children, it's every human being on the face of the earth. We struggle with this idea of authority. And here is my point, that it is not so much what we think it is. A lot of us think, "Well I don't like submitting to authority because of the authority figure. . . I don't like submitting to my boss because he is a moron and he doesn't know what he is doing. . . I don't like submitting to my husband because he is not a good leader. He doesn't lead me well. . . I don't like submitting to the government because this law is stupid. . . I don't want to pay taxes. That should be my income. I worked hard for it."

So we naturally think, "I don't want to submit because of them, because of the other party involved, because the one I should be submitting to." But the truth is it is an internal issue. It is our problem. And I will give you an example. God is the ultimate authority. He is sovereign. There is no one above Him. There is no one higher than Him. There is no one greater than Him. There is no one that He answers to. He is it. He is the ceiling. He is the top. And God, as the ultimate authority, is perfect, is loving, is gracious, He is good, He is all-knowing, He is omniscient and He is all-powerful. He is all these things and yet we still don't submit to Him. Read your Bible. Read the New Testament and think about your life. Look around you and you will see this. God says, "Don't steal, don't cheat, don't commit adultery, don't hate, don't murder, don't do these things." And what do we do? We are like, "You know, God, I know You've been around the block a little bit, but I've got my college degree and I think I am going to go with my intuition. I think I am going to try this because I think this will bring me more happiness. I think if I do my own thing here even though Your Bible has been around for thousands of years and You've been around forever and You are eternal and all this stuff, I think I am going to do my own thing and I think this is going to work out better." How many times do we do that? But here is a perfect authority figure and we still rebel against His authority.

So maybe we need to quit looking at the outside going, "Well, I don't want to submit to them because they are poor authority figures," or "I don't want to come under their leadership because they do some things that I don't really think are wise." Maybe we need to look inside and go, "Hey, maybe the issue is with me." Because then all these things that Peter has laid out, whether you are submitting to the government as authority or your masters, your bosses or wives even as your husbands, ultimately God gets glory from that. God gets a lot of glory from that. Because submission to authority is so rare in our culture. Our culture is very individualistic. "I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it."

So when you submit to authority, the world stops and goes, "Whoa, what are you doing? Why would you submit to this authority? Why would you come under their leadership and do that?" God calls us to submit to His leadership and to the leadership, the authority that He has appointed for His glory and ultimately for our good. Now here is the kicker: a lot of us want instant joy. We want instant gratification. We are like, "I'll do this, but I want to experience instant joy and instant gratification." And sometimes submitting to authority doesn't bring that. Everyone in here has had to submit to authority at some point in time in your life, whether it has been parents or bosses or whatever. And it doesn't bring instant joy. But

over the long haul, it's the same biblical truth. You continue to obey God and you will experience joy. This is God's design for a beautiful life, that you submit to authority. And this is God's design for a beautiful marriage, that you come under. Wives God's plan is that you come under the headship of your husband.

Let's keep going. I want to show you why this is so beautiful.

Look back in verse 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—when they see your respectful and pure conduct." Okay, do you see that? A wife submitting to her husband is such a beautiful thing that it can change a lost man's heart. It can change a lost man's allegiance to Christ through the spirit of God. God can use that kind of life, that kind of submissive spirit to go, "Hey, I'm going to change this guy's heart to worship Me." He can do that because a wife submits to her husband. That that is amazing. Scripture gives us all these different things. It says, "Hey, this reveals God!" Romans 1 talks about how creation reveals God. You can look at creation and go, "Wow, there must be a God out there." And if you spend any time traveling, you see sunrises and sunsets or you go to the mountains and you can see mountains and you just look at them and they are so majestic and it's awesome because it's May and there is snow on the top of them. Or you go to the ocean and you can just watch the ocean, the waves come crashing in. And you can see all these things just reveal God. Then you have a wife that submits to her husband, and you're like, "What? How does that reveal God? Because I can see all this stuff in creation. I can see the sunsets and sunrises, the mountains and the oceans and all these things. I can see how that reveals God." Because you look at that and go, "God must have done a work here. I don't know how this thing could form like this or how this could work like this. God must have done a work here." But the same can be said about a wife who submits to her husband, that God must have done a work here. Because there is no way that a wife can come under a man's leadership, especially a lost man who is not loving her like Christ has loved the church. There is no way that a woman could come under his leadership unless Jesus Christ has done a work there. It is the undeniable work of the Gospel in that woman's life that she would have such a transformation, such a change in her heart, that she would say, "Hey, I know doesn't lead me, but Christ leads the church. I know he doesn't love me like he should, but I'm going to come under his authority and it's going to be so shocking to him, so shocking to his system, so shocking to every thought, every preconception that he looks at that and he goes, "Wow, this woman, I've got to trace it back to why she's doing this. It must be this Jesus that she worships." It's the work of God. A submissive wife is beautiful in that. She is so beautiful, so attractive that it could make a lost man turn to Jesus. And that is real community.

Peter continues in this idea of beauty here in just a minute, and I'm going to get to that but I want to first define what submission is. Because as I am talking about this, there are some things going on in your mind and you're going, "Nuh-uh, I'm not going to submit to him. I'm not going to do this." And I want to just give you two things. The first thing is this. Submission is not that my wife submits to me as a tyrant ruler over her. That is not what submission is. Submission is not that she acquiesces to my every request. I don't sit on the couch and go, "Hey woman, give me some toast with some jam on it." That wouldn't work in my home, and if it does in yours, I just want to come watch. I don't know what that looks like. That's not what submission is. But we get this because it is misinterpreted from Genesis 3. Remember the fall when God comes in and says, "Hey, because you've sinned, there's going to be some changes. Woman you are going to have pain in childbirth. Men, you're going to have to work the land. Do all these things." And He says this to the wife, "And husbands shall rule over you." And some idiot was like, "Okay, I rule over you. I get this idea. Like a king. Alright, she's going to be my slave. That will work." And it has been interpreted like that for years and years and years, but that's not what that means. It means that you lead for her, you guide her and you care for her. It doesn't mean you sit on the couch and you demand a sandwich. It means lead like like Christ lead the church, ruled over the church, that He was the head and He loved that church and He gave His life for that church and He nourished the church. That is what it is referring to. It is not this tyrant rulership that is taking place.

The second thing is this. It doesn't mean that as wives you trade in your brains for a diamond at the wedding altar. It doesn't mean you come up here and you check your brains and are like, "Hey, I'm done thinking. My husband is going to think now." That is not what it means. One of the greatest gifts that I have is that my wife is incredibly smart at financial stuff. And the reason that is a great gift to me is because I am a moron. I barely got out of freshman Algebra. I'm just not good at math, just not good at business. I just don't have that mind. But my wife's dad is a financial planner. She gets finances. She gets how money works. She gets how we can do this and move this and shape this and actually pay our bills on time. It's amazing. I would be a fool not to allow her some insight into our finances. I would be a total moron not to go, "Hey baby, what do you think about this? We got this money. What should we do with this? Where should we put this? How should we allot this?" She goes, "I think we should do this. . ." But it still comes down to she submits to me as the head because I am ultimately in charge of that. As to God, I am accountable for those decisions. So all the time, I go to her and go, "Hey babe, what if we did this?" And she is like, "That's not smart." I'm like, "Okay, what if we did this?" She's like, "Hmm, I'd rather not." "Okay, what do you want to do?" "Okay, let's do that." I use her gifting. Now some of you might be going, "You're an idiot. I get finances." But your wife still hears from the Lord on stuff. There have been times that I've been like, "I feel like the Lord is pressing us to do this, to move in this direction, to go in this direction." And it is so affirming to me to go back to my wife and go, "Hey babe, I feel like the Lord is moving here. What do you think? What do you think He's saying?" And she's like, "You know, I heard the same thing." And I'm like, "Yeah, bluebird on the shoulder." And I get all excited or it is a good check in my spirit if I'm going, "Hey, I feel like the Lord is taking us in this direction." And she's like, "I don't know. I'll spend some time praying, but I don't know about that." That is a good check for me. She doesn't check her brains at the altar. She still has input. My brother-in-law was the one who did our premarital counseling, and it was such a blessing. I look back on that and I thought I knew so much. I was like, "I got this down. We're going to work this thing." And you get in there and they are like, "You're going to do this, and she's going to do this." And you're like, "Not us. We're in love." But I remember one specific illustration that he gave. He said, "It's like this, you're the head coach and she's your top assistant coach. You don't do things without referring to her and going to her and saying, 'Hey what about this?' That's what works. She's not the water boy on your team. She's your top assistant."

Let's keep going because I want you to see how this submission to your husband and all these things build and add up to a beautiful marriage. 1 Peter 3:3, "Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing— 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." Now, this is not saying, "Women, you shouldn't wear gold. You shouldn't do your hair. You shouldn't put on nice clothes." That is not what this is saying. He is saying your focus should be more on developing inner beauty than it should outer beauty. You see, our culture preaches this lie all the time, and the problem is that the church has bought into it that glamor is greater than godliness. We hear that all the time. We see more examples of it in our culture. We see it in magazines. You go to the grocery store and it's just covered with magazines about how to look better, how to be prettier, how to wear this dress, how to get into the spring fashions and do all these things. And there are very few examples in our culture today of really what a godly woman looks like. And maybe it is because we are not advertising, we don't honor that. But our culture values that glamor. We value what looks pretty and maybe in the church valuing and figuring out ways to value godly women more because they are a treasure. And honestly, it is easier to be glamorous to be beautiful physically on an outward appearance than it is inwardly, and I don't want to get stoned up here. Some of you women are like, "You don't even know. I got up at like 4:30 in the morning to look like this." And I'm not trying to be offensive to you but to get instant results, it is a lot easier for you to put on some make-up, to do your hair, to get dressed than it is to spend the exhaustive time becoming godly. It's not like you're going to show up to eat lunch with your girls as you've spent some time in the Word this morning. You're not going to show and and they're like, "OMG honey, look at you. You're just radiating with Jesus all over. I can tell you been in Leviticus this morning." They are just not going to see that as easily. They are just not going to see that. But they will over time. Adorning your heart takes time. It is a spiritual discipline. It is getting before the Lord, getting before Jesus day after day after day and spending time in your Word. That is what is attractive. Just finding a woman, whose Bible is just

worn out because she's been in it so much, a woman that prays is so attractive. That woman covers her family in prayer, covers her kids, that Proverbs 31 kind of woman, that is attractive. And it is attractive because it lasts. It's enduring. Did you catch what he said here? There in the end of verse 4, "Let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty." It doesn't fade away. A woman that is godly and is continually adorning her heart and adorning the insides, she'll be godly for years and years and years. I think about this all the time. My grandparents have been married for about 125 years. And it is not that my grandmother is still smokin' hot. She's 80 years old, but she is godly. She is godly, and it is so attractive. Every time I need some prayer, she is one of the first ones I call because I know she prays. That is attracting me. I am so attracted to her. I love her, and I think so highly of her. We need more like that, who value godliness over glamor, who put in the work to become godly, who spend the time adorning their heart more than just their outer appearance.

He gives a biblical example of someone who does this. And I love it because it is someone who didn't do it perfectly. It is Abraham's wife Sarah. She is not the perfect example. I love that the Bible is full of those kinds of people. They don't do it perfect. They are just trying because that is all of us, is it not? We are not perfect, we are missing the mark, but we're striving for Jesus, striving for godliness. Check it out, 1 Peter 3:5. "For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening." He gives Sarah as an example. Now Sarah was known in Genesis 12 for her outward beauty. Everybody knew she was beautiful. Egyptians saw that. Everybody saw that. She was a beautiful woman to look at. But I love that he is saying, "Hey, this woman was beautiful, but what was beautiful about her was her heart, her inward parts." I love that because though she may have been noted for that in Genesis 12, that she was beautiful on the outside, her legacy today says she had a beautiful heart and she subjected herself to her husband's leadership. Did she do that perfectly? No. As a matter of fact, there are biblical stories about how she failed in that area. But she strove for it. I love that he sets her up for that. We desperately need women like Sarah. We need women who say, "Godliness is of more value to me than glamor is."

Alright, enough with the women. Let's get to the men. 1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way." Live with your wives in an understanding way. This means to understand your wife. I looked all through the Greek to find that. But it means to understand your wife, to really know your wife and to comprehend her. Men tend to operate in areas of competency. That is why we can talk all day about sports and about business deals and things that we know we understand. We will chat on and on, and that is why some men can get home and become completely silent. Because they don't understand, they don't get their wife. They don't understand their daughters, and so they just shut their mouths. It blows me away to see and hear stories of the men, students that we work with, of these daughters that will come to us and go, "Hey, I've been dating this guy for 10 or 12 months now and I really like him and we've talked about marriage." And it's crazy because you're in high school and you don't even know what you're talking about. But she likes him, and she's like, "I don't get it. My dad won't even talk to him. He won't even say anything to him." And I'm like, "Really?" And this girl goes on and on and she is just sharing her heart and going, "That hurts me. He won't ever talk." And what she is equating that with is, "Hey, my dad doesn't care about me because he doesn't care about the things that I care about." He doesn't understand her. And guys, I know it is difficult to understand women. I have a two-year-old daughter, and I don't even understand her. The other day, we were in a store and she kept wanting to go sit on this little princess table, and I felt really out of place sitting there. She's like, "Daddy, come sit with me." And she drags my hand over there and she sat me down in this little chair, and there's like people watching me. I'm sitting at this princess table, and I'm like, "What do you want to do? You want to thumb wrestle? I don't know what's going on here." But I just stayed there. I want to understand her. The other night, my wife was like, "Hey, can you put her hair in pigtails?" I was like, "No, I'll try but I don't even know why you would want your hair all cinched up like that. You're yanking your brain out of socket, I don't even get that, but I'll give it a shot." I don't get why girls always want to wear pink all the time,

seven days a week. Like, look at all the pretty colors of the rainbow. Pink ain't even in the rainbow. "But alright, alright, I'll do it. I'll even wear a pink shirt to match you. All my friends will make fun of me and I won't care."

But guys, to understand that girl, to understand her is your job. It's not only your job, but it is your privilege to understand your wife, to understand your wife. And I think this is why God has given us a lifetime and said, "You're married to this woman to the grave. You're married to her for your entire life." Because it might actually take you your entire life to figure her out. It really might. But that is what you should do. And I'll even say this, I think you should know your wife and understand her better than her girlfriends do. And that is a bold statement, and I get that. Can I be honest? I am failing at that. But man, I want to pursue her. I want to know why she does things. I want to know her heart. I want to know her deeper and more intimately than even her girlfriends do. Why? Because I am the one in a covenant relationship with her, not her girlfriends. She is going to be living with me. If we move away, we're still together. Her girlfriends are in another town. I am the one that is raising my kids with her. I am the one that sleeps with her every night. I should know her that intimately, but it takes work. It takes work, and I think that is where it gets down to me, we just get lazy. And I get it. You come home from a long hard day at work, and you just want to sit down. You don't want to answer questions, you don't want ask questions. You just want things to be quiet because you've been on the phone all day. You had that still blue thing tied to your face. I get it. Then you need to sit out in the car and have a serious conversation with yourself and give yourself a little pregame pep talk before you enter that house. You go, "I'm going to go in and I'm going to love my wife. And I don't want to give all my energy to my job so I can make some money when my legacy is in my family. When this is what counts, my family, my wife and my kids." Do you not realize men, that you are teaching your kids, you're teaching your sons how to love their wives, and you're teaching your daughters how they should be loved? So if you don't pursue your wife to know her heart, to adorn her heart, to know her inward soul, then your daughter is probably going to go, "Okay, if that is what I have to do, if I have to dress like this to get some attention, then that is what I'll do." Then their expectation levels are really low for who they are going to date, because you don't pursue your wife. It is so important that you pursue your wife, that you know her, that you understand her.

I am a people watcher, and I've always been this way. I don't know why it is. I play soccer, and I love playing sports. I can run on soccer field or a basketball court or a football field all day long. But when we go to the mall, I pull a hamstring or something, and I just have to sit down. But I love just sitting and watching, even up here in the foyers. I just love just seeing people and talking to people. And my wife and I have started looking for this couple. And we find them every once in a while. They are the old couple who are sitting there at dinner and they are just talking back and forth and really enjoying each other. On the other hand, I see the other couple there far too often. They just kind of sit there and say very few words. They don't talk very much. There is very little dialogue going on, very little life at that table. But a couple years ago, Sarah and I were eating at Dairy Queen. We're sitting there, and I was fascinated. I couldn't even eat because there was this old couple sitting right across the way. And they acted like they were on some kind of hot date. They are in there and they are talking and laughing. He's playing footsies under the table and she's giggling and he's doing little things like, "What's that? Oh, stole a fry!" They are doing all this stuff. I mean, it was almost gross, but I just kept watching it. It's kind of like a car wreck. You just keep watching it. I left that and I was like, "I want to be that couple. I want to be 70 or 80 years old, still just having fun with you." And my wife said something so profound and I think she was saying it more like, accusing me, but she was like, "Well, it's going to take some work on your part." Amen. I hear that and I'm like, "Yeah, because it's my role as the man to pursue you. It's my role to lead us to that place." It's going to take time, it's going to take work to get there to pursue your wife and to continue to ask her questions. When we were dating, we wanted to know everything about our wives. You remember that? I remember dating my wife early on, and I'm like, "Hey take me to your home town. I want to see that. I want to see where you grew up. Take me to that old house you used to live at on Darwin Street. Take me to that middle school where you used to cheer at. Take me to that place where you got your first kiss and then take me to that dude's house so I can just whoop his tail. Take me to these places. I want to see where you used to hang out. I want to meet your friends. I want to see all this stuff. I want to see this. I want you. I want

to know where you came from. I want to know everything about you.” And then at some point, we are like, “Oh, I know everything about you.” And then things get stagnant. You don’t really ask them questions. And I’m going to get in so much trouble for this. Have you seen the movie Shrek? I feel like women are like ogres. Do you remember when Shrek tells donkey, “Ogres are like onions.” And Donkey was like, “They stink?” And he says, “No, they have layers.” Right? And I think that’s true with women, and it’s true with men. They have layers. And you’ve got to continue to peel back those layers and peel back those layers and peel back those layers and learn about their hurts and their fears and their joys and their sorrows and what stirs their affections and all these things and it’s going to take us a lifetime to peel back all those layers to understand your wife, to know her. That is your job. That is your privilege to do, men. It’s so huge.

Let’s keep going. “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel.” Now let me explain this weaker vessel. This is obviously talking about the physical. Generally speaking, men are larger than woman. It’s the way we’re built. We develop muscles quicker. So it is talking about physicality. It also means weaker in the context of your relationship in the marriage, as the man is the head. He is the leader. That is what is that is talking about. And it’s also talking about just being emotionally sensitive. Women are more emotionally sensitive than men. I don’t mean that in the sense that they cry more. That may be true, but they are more aware of things. Just a couple weeks ago. I was trying to hurry and get out of the house, and I just don’t perceive things sometimes. I just kind of get going on one track, and I’m like, “Let’s go, let’s go. Come on, come on, come on.” As I’m walking out I didn’t notice my son was trying to wrestle me and he jumps on my leg. I didn’t see him and I accidentally kicked him in the mouth. And he starts crying and I’m like, “Crew, we don’t have time to cry. Let’s go!” So we’re trying to head out and he’s following me down the hall crying. I’m like, “Quit crying. Let’s go, let’s go. We’re like an hour and a half.” And we’re trying to get out of the door and we come down the stairs and Sarah is like, “Blake, what are you doing? Look at Crew your son!” And I was like, “What?” And there is just blood running all down his mouth and I was like, “Oh I’m sorry buddy. Come here.” And she was like, “What are you doing?” And I tell her, “I don’t know. I’m not sensitive.” And I had to spend some time and go, “Okay, I’m sorry bud. I didn’t mean to kick you in the face and bust your mouth open.” She just got that. I’m just oblivious to that stuff sometimes. So this is not a bad thing that women are more emotionally sensitive. It’s a good thing. It’s helpful for my family. It’s helpful for my life. Because one thing I’ve noticed is my wife can read me better than I can myself. She knows when I’m getting stressed at work or when I’m dealing with some stuff. She just knows. She can see that in me. I just don’t have very good gauges. Like if I’m running low on something or I need rest, I just don’t read those. But she reads those. She’s more emotionally sensitive. That is a gift. That is what we should do. Honor the woman as the weaker vessel. Honor her. This goes back to Ephesians 5 as well. We should nourish and cherish our wives. Our wives should feel treasured. That is how you honor your wife, not just by giving her things, but by giving her yourself, giving your attention. Does your wife feel treasured? When I think of the weaker vessel, I think of our fine china that we got when we got married that we still haven’t used but twice. I think of the stuff that is in that special cabinet that men you can’t even get into. That stuff is delicate. That stuff is precious. You don’t let your kids drink out of those glasses. They drink out of the little sissy plastic cups that you can’t break really. They are indestructible. Does your wife feel like fine china? Do you take care of her and honor her and treasure her in that way?

Let’s keep going. “. . .since they are heirs with you of the grace of life.” I love this because this shows equality. Though men are to be the leaders in the home, they are still equal with their wives, equal in dignity, equal in grace. God doesn’t see men as being greater or of more value than women. You are co-heirs with Christ “of the grace of life so that your prayers may not be hindered.” I love this verse. “. . .so that your prayers may not be hindered.” He is saying, “Hey if you’re not loving your wife and honoring your wife like you should, your prayers will be hindered.” That is a profound verse, meaning if you’re not doing what you should be doing and loving her and honoring like you should be doing, then your relationship is going to be interrupted with God. That is powerful.

Here is my challenge. The marriage relationship is symbolic of Christ's relationship with the church. It is one of the most profound ways that God can get glory through us. Do people look at your marriage, your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers and see that? Do they see the gospel? Men, do they see the way that you love your wives and honor them and cherish them and respect them and understand them? And wives, do they see how you submit to you husband and how you try to adorn your inner beauty? It's one of the greatest ways that God can get glory in your life. I want to challenge you with that. This is God's road map for a beautiful marriage. Marriage is difficult. It is especially difficult if we're not doing it by God's design. So I pray that, as we continue in worship right now, I pray that you would reflect on that. I pray that you would search your own hearts to see where you might be lacking or where you could grow in some areas.

So let's pray. "Father, we thank You so much for who You are, for Your grace and Your goodness. We thank You for marriage and what a blessing it is. We thank You that it is beautiful, but it's a struggle. I thank You that we can just see You in it and we become more like You in marriage. And God, I pray that You raise up a generation of husbands and wives that love each other like You've called us to love. Do your work in us."

© 2010 *The Village Church*