

The Wife's Role
Ephesians 5:22-24
Pastor John Miller

Good evening. Let's open our Bibles to Ephesians 5. It's a blessing to worship with you guys tonight. It's a blessing to be here tonight, amen? Tonight we begin the role of the wife, then the role of the husband. I hope that the women won't feel like I'm picking on them by any means, because I'm not. What I say tonight, I say with a bit of fear and trepidation. This is scary talking to the women, okay? I should've had my wife preach tonight, is what I should've done. I'm going to do two weeks on the men, Ladies, so if you feel a little beat up tonight, the men are going to get a double barrel in the next couple of weeks, so that'll be fun, I can do that.

Tonight, the title of my message is, very simply, "The Wife's Role." When I first preached this sermon in this series years ago, I actually used the word "duty," the wife's duty, the husband's duty. The guys on staff kind of talked me out of it (taking it out), so I chickened out. I mention that because all we hear today is about rights. Everybody is screaming for their rights. Whatever happened to duty? We have this warped understanding that duty omits the idea of love. Just because you are doing it out of a duty, that it's not love, it's just your duty to do, but that is a complete false concept. You can respond out of your duty as a wife or husband, and you do it out of love for God and for your spouse. It has nothing to do with obligation. So, we are going to look at Ephesians 5:22-24. Would you join me in a word of prayer.

Father in heaven, I thank you for this blessed congregation of hungry hearts and people who want to hear what You have to say. That is our hearts' cry tonight, Lord. Our hearts' cry is to hear Your voice and to know what You have to say very clearly in Your Word. Your Word is true because You are the God of truth, You cannot lie. So, Lord, speak tonight through what You've spoken. Open our eyes and our ears...and we'll give You praise, and we'll give You the thanks, and we'll give You all the glory. We ask it in Jesus' precious name, and everyone agreeing said, amen.

Everyone knows, the guys that know me, people that know me know I'm a book guy. I love books, and I have quite a few books that I've collected over the years. There is a book on the home that's one of my favorites. I'm going to open with a short quote from it. It's called The Home Beautiful. It's written by J.R. Miller, no relation that I know of, but the copyright date on this book is 1912. So you think, "Well, you're going to open with a quote from a book on marriage in 1912? You are going to bash the women tonight!" But if you're in to going online and looking for out of print books, The Home Beautiful by J.R. Miller. When he starts the roles of the husband and the wife, he says these words, "Each member of the household has a part in the family life, and the fullest happiness and blessedness of the home can be obtained only when each one's part is faithfully fulfilled. If any one member of the family fails in love or duty, the failure mars the whole household life just as one discordant voice in the company of singers spoils the music though all the others sing in perfect accord." I like what he says there that it only takes one discordant voice, or one person singing out of tune or singing slightly off pitch to

ruin the whole musical. The same is true in family life.

As we look at the wife's role and the husband's role, we're going to see the importance that we focus on our responsibilities as a wife and as a husband. We're going to read verses that every married couple knows, but the problem with these verses is the husbands know the wife's verses, and the wives know the husband's verses. Every husband can quote, "Wives, submit to your husbands." They have that memorized. They don't know any other verses but that verse they know. Every wife knows, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it," right? All the wives can quote that verse. What we need to do is not focus on our spouse's role or responsibility or duty, but we need to focus on our role, our responsibility, and our duty. I believe that marriage by the Book, the Bible, can lead to a blessed and happy and wonderful marriage relationship and family life.

So, what are the roles for the wife? Let me name them, and then we're going to look at each one individually. There are three, the list could be longer and we could go into more detail, and in a message like this tonight, there is always going to be more questions than there are going to be answers for the questions, so forgive me in advance. I can't touch every facet of the wife's role or the marriage relationship, but I want to fundamentally deal with the three responsibilities or roles of the wife. The first is to love your husband, the second is to submit to your husband, and the third is to respect your husband. If you were to summarize them, you could summarize them: love, submit and respect.

The first point is to love your husband, and this does not come directly from my text in Ephesians, so if you are taking notes, write down Titus 2:4. It says this, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands." One of the reasons why I mentioned this responsibility is that so often we only think of the husband's responsibility is to love his wife. The wife's responsibility is to submit. "She doesn't have to love the dude. She doesn't have to like the dude. She's just gotta submit to him." "Okay, I'll submit, but I don't like him. I don't wanna do what he says," or "I don't want to be submitted to him," or "I don't think of him as the head of the family." The Bible actually calls both the husband and the wife to agape love, and that's what the word love is in the Greek. It's agape. You can find it defined in 1 Corinthians 13. So, Ladies, you need to read 1 Corinthians 13 and realize God has called you to actually love your husband. Didn't Jesus say, "Love your enemies?" That can include your husband. You say, "Amen, Preacher! I'll take that one!" If you are to love your enemies, certainly you are to love your husband.

Love isn't all emotion. Love is seeking the highest good of the object loved. When you love somebody, you're going to seek their best, you're going to seek their good, you're going to be concerned of what is good for them, not what is good for you. Love is not selfish, love is not rude, love is patient, love is kind, love endures all things, hopes all things, believes all things, love never fails. So, the glue that holds you together is agape love. Don't forget last Wednesday night, Ephesians 5:18, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." It was an imperative or command. When the Lord, through Paul, says, "Wives, you are to love your husbands, you are to submit to your husbands, you are to respect your husbands," he presupposes that this is a

Spirit-filled wife. A Spirit-filled wife has no problem loving her husband. It doesn't mean he's lovable. (Let's wait for another "amen" from somebody.) It means that God's love fills your heart and you are able to dispense that to your spouse. You can't generate it on your own, God gives you that love as you're filled with the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, lest I forget, and I'll hit on it I hope in other spots of this message, is everything we read here in Ephesians 5, from verse 19 all the way to chapter 6 verse 9, flows out of the Spirit-filled life. Wives submit to their husbands. Husbands love their wives. Children obey their parents. Parents do not provoke their children to anger, they don't exasperate their children. Slaves obey their masters, and masters are kind and generous toward their slaves. All this presupposes the Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life. So, wives you are to love your husbands. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and you can't do it without God's help.

The second point I would like to make is that the wife's role is to submit to her husband. This is the crux of the text, and I want to read it. Follow me in your Bible, Ephesians 5:22. It says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." I want you to note, the submitting of the wife unto her husband is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life that is surrendered and yielded to Jesus Christ, because in verse 21, the submission is mutual—submitting yourselves (verse 21) one to another in the fear of God. Please don't disconnect verse 21 with verse 22, mutual submission. As a matter of fact, in the Greek, everything flows out of it. It's one long sentence. "Be not drunk with wine...", verse 18, "...wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." When you are filled with the Holy Spirit you'll have joy in your heart, you'll be thankful (verse 20), and you will be submitting (verse 21) to one another in the reverence and the fear of God. So, before there is the wife's submission to her husband, before the husband is loving his wife as Christ loved the church, there is a mutual submission, one to another, in the reverential fear of God. So, you take a wife and you take a husband filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in the reverence and the fear of God, submitting one to another, and that will take care of the problems in your marriage. Spirit-filled marriage, submitting one to another in the reverential fear of God. It's a mutual submission.

I want to mention three relevant truths that we have learned from the Bible. Before I break this text down, I want to talk in a general sense about some things we learn from the Bible because whenever we talk gender roles and submission, the hair begins to stand up on the back of some people's necks. "Did he say submit? What cave did he just crawl out of? No wonder he's quoting from a book from 1912. It's probably when he was born." Now let me share this with you. First, the Bible teaches the dignity of womanhood, childhood and servanthood. The Bible actually teaches the dignity of womanhood, childhood and servanthood. I don't want to get sidetracked, but anyone that has studied the Greco-Roman world and the culture of the time this portion of Scripture was written, you know that the culture did not value womanhood, it did not value childhood, and it did not value servanthood or manual laborers. The Greeks despised manual laborers. Women were chattels. Men, in those days, would have a wife for his legal children, he would have some concubines, and he would have another woman for social pleasure. He would have a whole harem of women. It was not thought of as being wrong. It

was the Bible that came into existence here elevating women to her rightful place. Anybody that says, "Oh, yeah, you go by the Bible, man, that teaches slavery and stoning women if they commit adultery." They don't know their Bible. They haven't read their Bible. They don't understand the Bible. People just hear that and believe it. Take the life of Jesus, for example. Oh how tender, kind and compassionate He was toward women, especially the woman in adultery. "Neither do I condemn you, but go and sin no more."

I think of the woman who was from Samaria sitting on the well, and at high noon Jesus sat down and said, "May I have something to drink?" She was shocked. She said, "How is it you being a Jew, ask me a woman of Samaria for something to drink?" The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Not only was there a racial issue between Jews and Samaria, because they were half-breeds, half Jew half Gentile, but it was male and female. The male Jews would never talk to a woman in a public situation. They would always walk far behind them in public. They weren't allowed even to talk out in public. So, Jesus is talking with this woman. Then He begins to expose her life; that she'd been married five times, and was living at that moment with somebody out of wedlock. You think Jesus would go running for his life, "Oh, cooties! Cooties!" Jesus offered her living water, and that woman got saved. Her sins were forgiven and she became a child of God. She runs back into the city and says, "Come see a man which told me everything I've ever done and has forgiven me." What an awesome thing. All through the Bible, Old and New Testaments, and especially in the New Testament, when Jesus Christ arrived He elevated womanhood.

Do you know that male Jews in Bible days had a traditional prayer when they would wake up every morning? They would say, "God, I thank you that I'm not a Gentile, and I thank you that I am not a woman." Can you imagine that? You come to church and the pastor says, "Lord, I thank you that I'm not a woman." I guess in our culture today, no one knows what they are! God help us. They would be praying, "Lord, I don't know what I am." I better stop right there. In the Roman empire when a baby was born, do you know that they would take the baby and would lay it on the ground in front of the father? If the father picked it up they would keep the baby, if he turned and walked away the baby would be thrown into the trash. Many times if the child was a girl, a female baby, the father would walk away and they would throw the baby into the trash. It was Jesus that said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It was Jesus who said, "I come not to be served, but I come to serve. I come to give my life as a ransom for many." So womanhood, childhood and servanthood is elevated in the Bible.

The second thing I want to point out is the Bible speaks of the equality before God of all human beings because each is made in the image of God. Women are equal in being made in the image of God and in salvation and the relationship to God. They are not second-class citizens in the kingdom of God. They are not second-class citizens. The Bible says that in the church there is neither male nor female, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither Greek or Scythian (barbarian) for we are all one in Jesus Christ. The unity of all Christians as fellow members of the family of God is also taught very clearly in the Bible.

How do we reconcile this with this truth of submission? Well, we must understand the concept of submission. How do we understand submission? First let's look at what it's not. This is what submission is not, and again, the list could be quite lengthy, but submission is not another word for inferiority. I know for some of you this is basic and elementary, but I want to clear up some fog that a lot of people may have. Submission has no connotation whatsoever, in any way, shape or form, of inferiority. We associate that in our minds, "You know, you have to submit because they're better than you, or they're more important than you, or they're the leader or whatever." That is not what the word submission conveys. It doesn't have anything to do with your intrinsic worth or value. It does not mean the wife is inferior to her husband. Remember I pointed out in verse 21, there is to be a mutual submission to one another in the reverence or fear of God. Did you know that Jesus Christ himself was submitted to the Father? Do you know that Jesus said, "I do always those things that the Father tells me to do." When He was in the garden of Gethsemane He said, "Not My will, but thine be done. Father, if it's possible that this cup pass from Me...whatever Your will is, I submit to You." The Bible is very clear in 1 Corinthians 11:3. It says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." So, the head of Christ is God, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man. There is an order there for the sake of roles and function. Jesus Christ Himself submitted even though in essence He is equal to the Father. Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Not one person, but one in essence.

Secondly, submission does not mean slavish obedience to a dictator. Your husband is not the Gestapo. He is not the dictator. It is interesting that Paul doesn't say, "Wives obey your husbands." He doesn't just say obey your husbands, blanket unthinking obedience. There are conditions and there are issues involved with that. When it comes to Ephesians 6:1, he tells children to obey your parents. In verse 5 he said, "Servants, be obedient to your masters." He could have used the very same word in chapter 5:22, "Wives obey your husbands." He didn't. He said, "Submit to them." I think you will understand why when we look at this definition.

Thirdly, submission does not mean the husband makes every decision, the wife has no say so or that she can't have any input, she can't open her mouth, or the husband makes all decisions. When Albert Einstein and his wife were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary, their 50th anniversary, someone asked Dr. Einstein saying, "How did you make it through 50 years of marriage?" He said, "My wife and I when we got married had an agreement that she would make all the small decisions, I would make all the big decisions." He stopped after a minute and said, "Funny, after 50 years of marriage, there has never been a big decision." So a man would be a fool not to get his wife's counsel, not to listen to her, and make the decision together. Submission does not mean the man makes all the decisions.

Fourth, submission does not mean that the wife must obey ungodly counsel or commands. In Acts 5:29, it says, "We ought to obey God rather than men." If your husband says, "We're going to rob a bank. I watched the Bonnie and Clyde movie and we're going to become Bonnie and Clyde. I want you to submit, and we're gonna rob a bank." Or, "I want you to go get drunk," or "I want you to lie," or "I wanna do some wife swapping." You just say no way! Even if he quotes

verses at you, you don't have to obey when he's telling you to do something that is unscriptural or ungodly. It does go on to say that you are to submit in everything, but "thing" has to be brought into the context of those things that are in the fear of the Lord, those things that are obedient to the Lord. It has to be a husband who loves the Lord and loves his wife as Christ loved the church. No Spirit-filled husband would ever ask his wife to do something that would dishonor God bringing shame to their relationship.

So what does submission mean? Verse 22, "Wives, submit." Now, I'm going to tell you something that's probably going to blow your mind. Perhaps you've heard me mention it before, I did teach Ephesians on Sunday morning, and that is, in the Greek the word submit does not appear in verse 22. You say, "Hallelujah, praise God I'm glad I came tonight! Thank God I'm free at last!" You say, "What do you mean the word submit doesn't appear in verse 22?" It doesn't appear in verse 22. It appears in verse 21. You can check it out yourself. Do your own homework. It would read like this, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God..." or some translations have Christ. Then immediately, without a skip, it would say, "Wives, unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." So, is it telling you to submit? Yes! Sorry about that, Ladies. Technically, the word doesn't appear in verse 22, but is carried over from verse 21, and there are no verses in the Greek, it's just all one long sentence there.

Now, what does the word submit mean? Here you go, it literally means to arrange under. I hate to admit this, but it's true, again it isn't connotative of inferiority or dictatorship on the husband's part, but the word submit is pulled from the military world. That doesn't mean that you go around barking out orders for your wife to keep, but it only comes from the world of the military because it means to rank under or to submit under. It has the idea of order, and in the military there are rankings. So that there is harmony in the home, God has ordained roles, and the wife's is to place herself under her husband. I actually heard Lenya Heitzig, wife of my good friend Skip Heitzig, say that she defines submission as, to relinquish your rights to serve a greater purpose. I like that. I thought I'd better quote at least one woman tonight so I could be safe. It's the relinquishing of your rights to serve a better purpose. Even as Jesus relinquished His rights, He came down from heaven, and He didn't always use His divine prerogatives. He didn't always use His omniscience, He didn't always use His omnipotence, and He submitted to the will of the Father. It's voluntarily putting yourself in the place of helping by arranging yourself under. It's voluntarily putting yourself under your husband to help him and to serve him. Remember, I will make a helper suitable for him. Now the word conveys the idea of order and function. That's what it conveys, the idea of order and function. Even as Christians, we have to submit to the civil authorities. We have to submit to governmental authorities. We have to submit to the police department. If I leave church tonight, and I make an illegal turn and a policeman pulls me over and I say, "I don't have to submit to you, I submit only to God." Again, the police officer will say, "Well, I do too, and I am the Lord's servant. Here's a big fat ticket preacher boy! Put that in your Bible." When you go to work tomorrow, if you have a boss and he asks you to do something, "I don't have to submit to you! I submit only to God!" You're fired. You submit to your boss. Submission isn't a bad thing. There has to be order or there will be chaos in our culture today. So the wife's responsibility and function is to submit to her husband.

How is the wife to submit to her husband? Here is what I call the mission of submission. Notice verse 22, "... as unto the Lord." Get your eyes on the Lord, and get them off your husband. If you keep looking at him for too long you'll get depressed. You need to focus on Jesus, and that you're doing it for Jesus, you're doing it as unto the Lord. So, the mission in submission is that you're doing it in obedience as unto the Lord. You're doing it as an act of obedience to God. I think it is a great act of faith as well as obedience. Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." So, what we call this mission of submission is done out of our love for and obedience to God. I actually believe the more spiritual a wife is, the more she is filled with the Holy Spirit, the more submissive she will become in her relationship to her husband. In 1 Peter 3 it says, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word...", in other words, if they are not Christians, "...they also may without the word...", or without you preaching, "...be won by the conversation of the wives," or the way that you live. "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." And, your adorning should not be the focus, of outward adorning of the hair, "... and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." When you get a chance, Ladies, that's your homework, read 1 Peter 3:1-6. There is important instruction there for the wife's role and responsibility. It won't always be easy to submit to your husband. The Bible doesn't say it's easy, but you do it as unto the Lord, and you do it as an act of faith. I think that sometimes when you think your husband is wrong in discussing something, and believe it or not, even in a Spirit-filled marriage, even in a Christian marriage, you won't agree on everything all the time. You have to pray together. You have to wait upon the Lord. You have to say, "Lord, is it I? Lord, check my heart, check my attitude. Am I being disobedient? Am I being rebellious? Am I resisting what You want to do here?" Be open to the Spirit's leading in your relationship.

Why should a wife submit to her husband? Let me give you four reasons. First, because the Bible teaches that. That should be enough, right? If we are Spirit-filled wives, the Bible says that we should be submissive to our husbands, that's enough. Second, it's pleasing to the Lord, Colossians 3:18, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Colossians also says it is pleasing to the Lord. So, first it's taught in the Bible and second it pleases God. Third, it is good for your marriage. It's good for your marriage and it's good for your children. We've been recommending the book on Wednesday night (I hope it's still in the foyer) Marriage and the Public Good. Let me read you what it says on this chapter on the well-being of children as it relates to marriage.

"The evidence linking the health of marriage to the welfare of children is clear. During the last two decades, a large body of social scientific research has emerged indicating that children do best when reared by their mothers and their fathers in a married-intact family. A recent report by Child Trends, a nonpartisan research organization, summarize the new scholarly concession on the marriage this way. Research clearly demonstrates that family structures matter for children, and the family structures that help children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in low-conflict marriage. Other recent reviews of literature on marriage and the well-being of children conducted by the Brookings Institute, the Woodrow Wilson School of

Public and International Affairs in Princeton University, and the Center for Law and Social Policy, and the Institute for American Values all have come to the same conclusions."

Several weeks ago I just made that statement. I said, "The best thing for your children is their biological mother and biological father in the home, and the best thing you can do for your children is have a good marriage." You got that? Now, I know that may sound Leave it to Beaver or Father Knows Best or 1912 or whatever it might sound like, but I believe that not only is the social scientific studies and research proving it to be so, I believe that's what the Bible actually teaches and indicates. Just a quick little footnote, this is one of the reasons why I am so heartbroken that the government of the United States is not supporting traditional marriage. I cannot think of anything more detrimental to the health and well-being of our nation than to undermine God's divine design and institution of marriage. It's the worst thing that we could do. The best thing we can do as a church and as the government is to support marriage, encourage marriage, encourage the covenant relationship of marriage. That's the healthiest thing we could do for our children, and the ill effect it's going to have on children and our nation is unmeasurable. So, it's pleasing to the Lord, it's taught in the Bible, it's good for your marriage and your children, not to mention the church and the nation, but fourthly, because the husband is the head of the wife, verse 23.

Why should the wife submit to her husband? Notice verse 23. The word "for" indicates reason or rationale. It indicates why it's good for the wife to submit to her husband. This is what it says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Headship conveys saviourhood. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Is that a bad thing? No, that's a good thing. He gives His life for the church to save the church. So, the husband who is the head of his wife will give his life to save and help his wife. Why? Because the husband is the head of the wife. I believe that a wife's submission enables her husband to be the leader that God wants him to be. This is not always the case, but sometimes women will say, "I want my husband to be more of the leader." If you want him to be more of the leader then you be more of a follower. You be more submissive. Ask God to give you a meek and a quiet spirit, which in His sight is of great value, great price. If you want your husband to be enabled and you pray for him, encourage him, and just a little practical note, try as best you can to find something he's doing right, ("Well, pastor, you don't know my husband,") and thank him for that. Encourage him, instead of picking out all the things he does wrong, find what he does right and encourage him, pray for him and thank God for him. Remember when you're filled with the Holy Spirit you'll be joyful and thankful as well as submissive? So, say, "God..." I know it's hard, "...th th thank you for my husband. There I said it." When some women read these verses they say, "Well, that wouldn't be in the Bible if my husband had been living when this was written." Paul would've never said 'wives submit yourselves to your husbands' if my husband were alive when that was written." It's not so. So, the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church.

Let me say a couple thoughts about headship. Headship is based on creation. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 (I already read it, but) all the way down to verse 12, creation not culture. When people talk about, "Well, times have changed, the culture has changed." God hasn't changed and His

Word hasn't changed. Secondly, it's not chauvinism, but it's creationism. I believe that the teaching of the theory of evolution in our culture has led to a lot of moral decay. We no longer have a creator, we are no longer responsible to God, and we're no longer created with a design and an intent and a purpose. We've just evolved, and so we're evolving a little farther so we can be whatever kind of sex we want to be. Marriage can be whatever it wants to be. There are no absolutes, and we're just a product of evolution. We are just a part of the evolutionary progress. So let's all evolve together rather than saying that we were actually created and designed by God. God made the man, God made the woman. He made them complimentary, and God designed them that they can be fruitful and multiply. God has actually created you; who you are, and be who you are to the glory of God. It has nothing to do with culture or chauvinism. It's all about creation.

Secondly, it is also about redemption. Notice in verse 23, "...as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." An attack on marriage as we are seeing in our culture today, is an attack on God the creator. It is an attack on God the designer. Even when you try to change who God has made you, it's saying to God, "You did a bad job," or "You made a mistake," or "You don't know what you're doing." Nothing can be further from the truth. God made you. He created you, and you're made in His image and likeness, and you have a purpose. So headship is saviourship. It speaks of care. It speaks of responsibility. It speaks of protection, and it speaks of provision. Any husband worth his salt will protect his wife, take care of his wife, will provide for his wife and shelter his wife. Remember Eve was made from Adam's side so she could be close to him, not from his head to be over him, not from his feet to be walked on by him. Christianity elevates womanhood. Next Wednesday night when we get to the passage in verse 25 when Paul says, "Husbands love your wife." That verse was absolutely radical and revolutionary for that time and that culture, never even heard of before. "You're saying, love my wife? Where'd that come from?" That's what God wants in our relationships. Paul's summary is in verse 24, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." This statement is in the present tense, it's continuous, and it is comprehensive, "...in every thing," and I've already mentioned not things that are sinful. But, be careful, Wives, that you don't pick and choose what you want to submit to. Your husband says, "I want to take you out for dinner." "I submit, I'll submit." "I want to buy you a dress." "Yes, I submit." Your husband says, "Could you make some mashed potatoes this week?" "Rebuke you, Satan. Get behind me, Devil. The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not cook.'" Are you going to pick and choose what God wants you to do, submission to the Lord? If it's not ungodly or unscriptural or out of bounds, then I think you should make those mashed potatoes.

Here's my last point, and I'll try to wrap this up. Love your husband. Submit to your husband. Are you ready for the third? Respect your husband. Jump down to verse 33. It says, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular..." speaking to husband and wife, "...so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." My King James Bible has reverence him. The word would be best translated, respect. I don't know if you've ever heard of the Amplified Bible, but this verse in the Amplified Bible is quite amazing. Let me read it to you. It says, "...that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly."

You say, "That's amplified all right. That sector is plugged in and its got a lot of amps. That thing is on steroids." But, I think to summarize submission he uses the word respect. You know, there are a lot of wives that just flat out don't respect their husband because maybe they're not respectable. Nobody's perfect, and believe me, I've been a pastor a long time, and I've done a lot of marriage counseling, and my flesh gets so tired and weary. After counseling couples, I always want to go home and hug my wife and thank God for my wife. There are a lot of dodo bird husbands out there. My heart goes out to these poor women. As a general principle in the Bible, you are to respect your husbands. Sometimes, even in public, a husband will make a statement and the wife rolls her eyes, "There you go you dumb...always saying stupid stuff again." It shows no respect for her husband. It can go both ways. Again, find something he's doing right, encourage and pray for him, and support him as best that you can. Submit, respect, and love your husband.

Some of you might be saying, and I told you I couldn't cover everything, but you might be saying, "This is dangerous. This is really dangerous. I'm glad I didn't bring my husband tonight, because if he hears this, it's going to be all over for me." I believe that God knows what He's doing. I believe that God's ways are best. Be careful that you don't develop your concepts about marriage from the television. I am shocked at how detrimental television and movies are today toward marriage; mocking the concept of traditional marriage and the idea of submitting to the husband, or the husband is the head of the home, mocking the husband and making a fool of him. This has been going on for a long time on television. You know, the husband is a doofus, and the dad is a doofus, rather than showing respect and love in the home. Be careful that you don't develop the attitude or the outlook on marriage from magazines. Fill your mind with God's Word and be careful. I've seen this from experience. Ladies, if you're working outside the home and you go to lunch with girls that aren't Christians, (they don't love the Lord, they don't believe in the Bible,) and you begin to share with them some of the struggles that are going on in your marriage, they're going to give you bad counsel. They're going to give you really bad counsel. More than one Christian wife has made a foolish mistake in listening to the counsel of the ungodly. Psalm 1 says, "Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly. Don't sit in the seat of the scornful, but that your delight should be in the law of the Lord, and in His law you should meditate day and night." You should marinate your mind and your heart in the Word of God. Let it shape and mold your outlook and attitude when it comes to being a submissive wife, loving your husband and respecting him. You might say, "Well, if I do this, he's going to take advantage of me." That's where it takes enough faith to believe that God will take care of you. God will protect and take care of you.

Nowhere in the Bible does it encourage you to live in an abusive relationship. What becomes real sticky is when it goes from verbal abuse to physical abuse. Abuse can come in different forms and fashions, but clearly a Christian wife's submission to her husband is not to be a punching bag. You are not to submit to your husband. I've even heard husbands say, "Well, if she'd submit, I'd quit smacking her." That's absolutely absurd. Sometimes the wife gets the idea that, "You know, if I was more submissive. If I was more obedient, then he wouldn't hit me or abuse me this way." That's not true. I have sometimes had to advise wives, "You need to get out of the home. You need to get away from that situation." God hasn't called you to be abused

in that way, physically to be a punching bag. So, don't get the idea that submission means that you just let him do whatever he wants. Sometimes you have to be firm and draw those lines. You say, "Well, if I do that I won't be happy." Trust me. Jesus washed the disciples' feet in John 13 and after He finished doing this said, "Happy are you if you do this." He actually used the word "happy." He said, "Happy are you if you do this."

Now, we aren't finished. Next week is the husband's role, and I'm going to take two weeks defining the husband's role toward his wife. Let's pray.