

The Spirit-Filled Wife

Ephesians 5:22-33

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Have you ever bought an object and opened the box and it says, “For best results, follow the manufacturer’s instructions,” right? I know that sometimes I think about Christmas when I’m putting together toys for the kids (I used to have to put the toys together). I hate instructions, and I hate following the instructions. I just look at the picture, and it usually doesn’t work out. Then, I start talking about whoever designed or made it and why it doesn’t work. I kind of lose my sanctification just a little bit. The truth is that when it comes to marriage—listen carefully—for best results, follow the Creator’s instructions. Amen?

We’re going to look at the subject of how do we have a happy and healthy marriage in a confused and corrupt, ever-changing culture. Man, our culture is corrupt and changing and opposing marriage, that’s for sure. I believe that there is a great satanic assault on marriage today. I believe, beginning all the way back in Genesis 3, that Satan attacked marriage and still attacks marriages today. If you’re a married individual, Satan wants to destroy you and your marriage.

It’s interesting what I discovered in reading James Boice’s commentary on this portion of Scripture. He pointed out something that I’d never taken note of that Ephesians puts the subject of marriage between being filled with the Spirit and being clothed with the armor of God, satanic warfare. Actually, you have, “...be filled with the Spirit,” and then it moves into the marriage relationship, it moves into husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves, and then no sooner that we get by that section, it talks about being prepared to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” so he’s very wily and comes to attack the area of our marriages, and certainly that’s true today.

Write down 2 Timothy 3:1-3. There are several, and I’m not listing them all, indications that we’re living in the last days. First, there are perilous times; second, people will be lovers of self; third, they’ll be lovers of money or covetous; fourthly, without natural affection or no love of family, which would include marriage; and fifthly, they would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. In the last days we can expect people to have “...a form of godliness but denying the power thereof,” and they have love of self, love of money, no love of family, but a love for pleasure.

In this text that we’re covering, it really is a marriage manual, and God gives us very, very specific roles in His Word. This is one of the most important passages in all the Bible, not just the wives’ section but the wives and the husbands. This is one of the key passages in the Bible, the New Testament, concerning the roles of the husband and the wife. It’s a manual for marriage. The way to have a blessed, happy, healthy marriage is to follow God’s marriage manual in the Bible, the Word of God.

Marriage is a divine institution. It’s established by God, and all other institutions actually come

out of that—as goes marriage, so goes our culture. You can't play fast and loose with marriage. When we talk about redefining marriage and think that it has no ill effect on our culture, we are so deceived. The idea that we can actually shape or make it however we want, marriage is a divine institution. We looked at that last Wednesday night, I just remind you of the book of Genesis, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh," and Jesus said in Matthew 19, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The same passage is mentioned in our text in Ephesians 5, and we'll get it next week. Marriage is a divine institution, it's foundational for society, and it is certainly under attack today. We cannot survive without marriage in our culture or in our world.

There are three responsibilities given to us for the wife, and the focus tonight is the wife's role or responsibility. Make no mistake about it, a marriage involves responsibility. If you don't want to be responsible for your part in the marriage, then you certainly should not get married.

Let's read the text, but I'm going to back up as I said to Ephesians 5:18. Follow with me. Paul says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," or debauchery, "but be filled with the Spirit," we talked about the need and the command there to be filled with the Holy Spirit. What happens when we're filled with the Spirit in our marriage and in our home? We'll be speaking to one another "...in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord," so you'll have a joyful, happy home. Secondly, we'll have a thankful home, verse 20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thirdly, here's the key, we will have a submissive home, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear," or reverence, "of God." There will be a mutual submission. You will submit yourselves to God in reverential fear, and then you will submit yourselves to one another—both of you serving one another in the marriage relationship as you reverence or fear God.

I went over all of this last week, so if you weren't here, you missed some of it. I just refer you to go back to that and listen to it on our website. It's so important for a couple that's married and any individual believer to have as the foundation of their lives, the fear of the Lord. The most important quality in finding a spouse in marriage is the fear of the Lord. If I had it to do all over again (and I thank God I don't have to do that all over again), if I had to find a spouse, the number one attribute I would be looking for in a wife is the fear of the Lord. If you're looking for a husband, you look for a man who fears the Lord—loves the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. You have two individuals that are seeking and loving God. The Bible says, "...and a threefold cord is not quickly," or easily, "broken." It's not just a husband and a wife, it's Jesus Christ in the middle of that relationship and they're bound together in their love and their fear of the Lord. Then, they're walking in His Spirit, and the Bible says in Galatians, "...and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

I've taken what could be a several weeks study and reduced it to three things for the wife, and I want you to write them down. The first is not from my text, but I wanted to include it, that is, very simple, it's kind of a given, love your husband. If you are married, you should love your husband. Now, why do I include this? I include it because so often it's reduced to: the wife's

role is submission, and the husband's role is to love. It's almost like the wife doesn't need to love her husband. She just needs to, "Okay...I'll submit. I don't love you, and I don't want to do this, but I guess that's my job," and the husband says, "Well, I just gotta love you," and kind of does his thing. Certainly, a wife should love her husband, and a husband should love his wife. Amen? This is to be on the top of your list. Write down the passage. It's Titus 2:4. The Bible actually says that wives should love their husbands. It mentions that the older women should, "...teach the young women," and lists the things that they should be taught by the older women, "...to love their husbands," is right in the middle of that list, "...be sober...to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home...to love their children," and "...to love their husbands." Again, the Greek word in that passage is the Greek word *agape*. It's a sacrificial, self-denying, giving love.

Let me mention, under this point, what are the priorities of a wife to be? The same as the husband: 1) to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind; 2) to love your husband; 3) and this is in the order of priority, to love your children. Now, children are a blessing. They're a gift from God, and wives and fathers and mothers and parents should be devoted to their children, but you should never allow your children to take the priority in your marriage relationship. You should never neglect them. You should be as a team together devoted to them, but they should never divide a married couple. Remember we read the foundation of marriage? Leave, cleave, and become one flesh.

Your children are designed to leave. I've often said that the Bible likens them to arrows in a quiver, and I thought arrows are to be put in a bow and shot, right? and maybe shoot them as far away as you can. Just point, (shooting sound), "It's time for you to leave the nest." I love my kids, and I love having them home. We have my son and daughter-in-law and new grandson coming to visit this next month for several weeks, and I'm looking forward to that, but you raise them to send them. You raise them to find spouses and to become one flesh. They are glued together. The marriage relationship is a tighter permanent bond than the parent-child relationship.

There have been marriages damaged because the wife has neglected her husband for the children, or vice versa. Generally, it's a thing where the wife, devoted to the children as she should be, a good mother, but she also has a husband and needs to keep that in balance. It's quite a job and a task, but the priorities are: loving God, loving your husband, and loving your children. I just gave you the top three, but your career or occupation or job outside of the home comes after that. I'm not saying a woman cannot work out of the home, but she needs to maintain her priorities.

One of the problems in the assaults on marriage today is that we have so many women in the workforce that no one is home watching or taking care of the kids. I'm not anti-women working by any means at all, but I do believe there is value in staying home and being devoted to your children; and the fruit that comes from that is absolutely enormous and being actually committed to your husband, your children, and taking care of the home. But you actually need to realize that God has called you to love your husband.

You might be tempted to say, "But that was written in the Bible before my husband was born." I know that sometimes when I'm doing marriage counseling and I read these verses, I can see either the wife look at me or the husband look at me and say, "That can't pertain to my wife." "That can't pertain to my husband. No way! If my husband were alive when this was written, he would not have put it in the Bible because he's so unlovable." It doesn't say, 'If they're unlovable,' it just says, "...love their husbands," to "...teach the young women to...love their husbands," it's so very important.

Remember, Galatians 5:22, that love is a fruit of the Spirit, so I'm tying this all back to Ephesians 5:18, "...but be filled with the Spirit," let the Spirit fill you continually and ongoingly. Write down 1 Corinthians 13, and read the Bible's definition of love. We'll get to "Husbands, love your wives," next week—Ladies, make sure your husbands are here, and guys come on out full force—and we're going to be looking at the husband's loving their wives as Christ loved the church.

The second requirement or duty or responsibility, and I'm not afraid to call it a responsibility or duty, is "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," verses 22-24, "as unto the Lord." Here's the rationale or reason, "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." That doesn't mean the husband is the wife's savior, but it means that Christ gave Himself to save us so a husband should give himself in service to his wife.

Verse 24, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Before we examine the subject of submission, I want to mention three important truths from the Bible. Before we unpack the meaning, the methods, and the motive for submission, I want to say this: 1) the Bible teaches the dignity of womanhood, of childhood, and of servanthood. The world little understands what it owes to Christianity, especially women. You talk about women being elevated, women being exalted, women being liberated, it's found in Jesus Christ. All you have to do right now is go to countries that lack Christian influence, I mean what woman would want to go live in Afghanistan right now where there's little Christian influence and women aren't elevated to their proper place? In the Bible, women are not despised, they're not put down, they're not second-class citizens, they're not inferior to men, so none of that is denoted in this concept of submission. It's so important.

Lest I forget, I want you to note something really amazing, and I'll bring it out more next week, that wives submit to their husbands, but the Bible includes husbands love their wives. Children obey their parents, but parents are told to not provoke their children to anger but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Slaves are told to obey their masters, but their masters are told to give to their servants that which is just and equal and right. Everybody's attacking the Bible saying, "Oh, what a horrible book. How archaic it is," and even standing up before you tonight in teaching, I'm teaching from the Bible, by the way, that a wife should submit to her husband. In our culture today, it's insane the idea that any woman would submit to her husband or that doctrine would be taught in the Bible. Our culture dismisses that completely, yet God created marriage, He designed marriage, and this is how it's to function for its greatest

blessing and benefit to everyone; so we're not following our culture. We're not following cultural trends. We're not following what's popular or en vogue or what's happening in the world. We follow God's manual in His Word. Amen? It transcends time and culture, and we'll talk more about that in a minute.

The second thing I want to mention before I talk about submission is the Bible promotes the equality before God of all human beings. Thirdly, in the church, the body of Christ, we have unity. The Bible says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free...male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In our relationship to God, I'm not talking about our function but our standing before God and our value intrinsically in worth before God, we're all standing on equal level, so dignity of womanhood, equality of all human beings, and unity in the church, the body of Christ.

How do we reconcile these truths in the Bible with the doctrine that wives should submit to her husband? Well, let's look at what submission is not, if you're taking notes. First of all, it's not implying that a wife is inferior to her husband. It does not imply that he's more valuable, more important, more talented, more capable, or anything of that nature. It doesn't imply that at all, or he's more valued before God or more intelligent by any means. The doctrine of submission is not just exclusively for wives to their husbands, and if you've never seen or realized that, it's so important. Jesus, the second Person of the Godhead in the very Trinity, submits to the Father. One day He will turn all things over to the Father, but the Father actually had the will for the Son that He came to fulfill by coming to earth and redeeming fallen humanity, so Jesus submitted.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," and He submitted to the Father's will and went to the cross to redeem mankind. Even within the Godhead, there's a relationship of submission for the sake of function in their purpose and plan of redemption.

We also see, back up in verse 21 when we read it, "Submitting yourselves one to another," so those who make a big deal out of the wife's submission to the husband, they need to back up one verse and realize that there's a lot of aspects in which the husband submits to his wife, where he sacrificially, self-denyingly gives of himself to seek her best. The love of a husband for his wife is to seek her best, not what he wants, to seek God's will and God's purpose and God's glory. Don't forget verse 21, "Submitting yourselves one to another," there's a mutual submission in the marriage relationship, not just for wives. Children have to submit to their parents, we have to submit to the authorities of our government—if you leave tonight and take off down Scott Rd speeding and a police car comes up behind you and turns on his red light, what should you do? Pull over, right? and submit to the powers that be. It doesn't mean he's better than you or he's more spiritual than you or more smarter, it means he has a position and a function over you and you must submit.

When you go to your job and your boss tells you to do something, you submit to him. You're learning submission. Children in the home have to submit to their parents, so it's not just a

doctrine for wives, and it does not denote the idea of slavish obedience to a dictator. Submission and headship of the husband of the wife does not convey the idea of dictator or a despot ruling over his wife and his children. In verse 25, we'll get next Wednesday, "Husbands, love," or agape, "your wives."

Another thing it's not, it's not the husband making all the decisions. It doesn't mean that the husband doesn't seek the wisdom of his wife. It doesn't mean he makes all the decisions. The husband can delegate things to his wife. My wife is capable in a lot of areas—I'm laughing because "a lot of areas" means just about every area—that I am not. Pray for me. If I lost my wife, I don't know what I would do. I would be in bad shape. I'm alive because of her right now, and there's so much that she does that I delegate to her and she takes care of so wonderfully, and I thank God for that. It doesn't mean that the husband makes all the decisions.

It's said that Albert Einstein and his wife were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Someone asked, "Dr. Einstein, how did you survive 50 years of marriage with your wife?" He answered, "Well, we had an agreement when we first got married that I would make all the major decisions and she would make all the minor decisions," and then he paused for a moment, "It's interesting, after 50 years of marriage, there's never been a major decision." So, it's not saying that he doesn't consult his wife—they pray, they decide together—but it is saying that the wife is to submit ultimately to the husband's headship and leadership.

Here's my second question: What does submission mean? The etymology of the word itself means to arrange under or some have rank under. Yes, I admit, and this might scare some people a bit, that it actually comes from a military background or concept. Now, I've never served in the military, but they have ranking and superiority, order, and they have people that need to obey their superiors in the military. Some of you that have served in the military know that—you can't rebel against your superiors. The idea means that you arrange under. The concept is for the sake of function and order. If you're taking notes, you should write those words down: order and function. It's not superiority and inferiority, but order and function so there won't be confusion or strife but there will be order and function in the marriage. It means to arrange yourself under.

Remember, God made Eve in the book of Genesis to be Adam's helper, "I will make him an help meet," suitable, "for him." I know a lot of Bible scholars debate over what the word "help meet" means, how it's really to be interpreted in the Hebrew and all that stuff, but I think the concept is pretty clear, even in the English translation, that God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet," suitable, "for him." I've heard all the jokes about Adam would get lost and not be asking for directions, so He made Eve so they could find out where to go, or his fig leaf would wear out and she would have to sew him another one.

The truth is man's aloneness is not good, so God actually made the woman to complete the man, to actually be a helper suitable, fitted, for him. As a wife, you need to remember that one of your callings is not just to submit or arrange yourself under your husband, but to do it for the purpose of order, function, and to be a helper to your husband. Wives, are you helping your

husbands? It's a simple question, but a really important one: Are you helping your husband? Are you praying for him? Are you supporting him? Are you encouraging him?

I would say that any man in a marriage, if he really got to the core of his being, would admit that what's most important to him is the support and love and encouragement from his wife. I can handle a lot of attack and opposition and difficulty, but I have to have my wife on my team. I have to have her support. I can't do it without her, and what a blessing that is! Behind every great man, there's a great woman. I believe that's true because we are not good by ourselves, "It is not good," man's aloneness, "I will make him an help meet," suitable. Ask yourself wife, am I helping my husband to be a better man of God, to be better at whatever his career or occupation might be or calling or ministry?

Here's the third question to ask: How is a wife to submit to her husband? What is the manner? Well, it's to be done, notice our text, verse 22, "...as unto the Lord." That changes everything. Not as unto him, but "...as unto the Lord." If you look at your husband, you can get depressed—don't even look right now, you'll get discouraged. I'm kidding. But if you look at the Lord, you'll be blessed. Keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. There's so much in this statement, "...as unto the Lord." It indicates that it's voluntary, that God is strongly admonishing us to submit to our husbands, but He wants it to be the same way—we voluntarily, willingly, lovingly submit as unto the Lord.

Another way to see that, here's a parallel passage, Colossians 3:18, "...as it is fit in the Lord." I like the Colossians rendering, "...as it is fit in the Lord," so it's spiritually becoming or fitting as you do it as a goal. This is what I call submission with a mission—I want to do it as unto God. I want to do it to honor God. I want to do it to glorify God. I want to bless God, and I know that God is admonishing me to do this, so I want to do it as unto the Lord, even though I may not feel my husband is worthy of that, and I don't believe that's the basis or manner for our submission. It's done, I believe, in faith.

I've always felt that a woman needs to totally trust God, put her confidence in God, to submit to her husband because it can be pretty scary, I know, for the ladies to do that. What if he makes a wrong decision? What if he doesn't make a right decision? What if he wants us to do something that's not right? "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." In the Hebrew that's "make your path straight." God will not let you down. God will never fail you. You do what God's called you to do; you can trust Him to take care of you. You rebel against God, you disobey God, and you're on your own. If you're in the will of God, living for the glory of God, you can trust God with your safekeeping, with your family, with your decision, and you can put your husbands in God's hands.

I believe that wives should dedicate their husbands to the Lord. Say, "Lord, I just give him to You. I can't fix him. I can't straighten him out. I put him in Your hands. You take care of him." The Bible says, "Casting all your care upon him," that may include your husbands, so it's going to take faith to submit to your husband.

Here's a fourth question: Why should you, as a wife, submit to your husband? This is the motive of submission, the "why" of submission. Let me give you three quick reasons: 1) because it is biblical. It's in the Bible. It is scriptural; it is biblical. Again, verse 22, it's done "...as unto the Lord." This is an earnest appeal for voluntary submission. 2) It's pleasing to the Lord, and I just read that, Colossians 3:18. Sometimes we look so much at Ephesians, we forget the Colossians passage—it's pleasing to the Lord. It blesses the Lord. 3) The husband is the head of the wife. Notice verse 23. It says, "For," that's the reason or the rationale, "the husband is the head of the wife." Notice he is the head of the wife, not maybe the head of the wife or maybe become the head of the wife, he is. God has established him in that position. So, "...even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." The reason behind your submission is that God has placed him there as your head.

What does headship imply? Well, it doesn't imply dictatorship. It implies two things: care and responsibility—protection, care, provision, responsibility. The head as the husband over the wife, he's to care for her, he's responsible for her, he's to watch over her, supply for her, and take care of her. We're going to see in Ephesians 5:29 next week that husbands should nourish and cherish their wives, "...even as the Lord the church." The words "nourish and cherish" literally means to warm with body heat. I don't think that just means that they should physically show affection, but I do believe that's implied. They should be affectionate to their wives, but it also means that they should shelter, protect, and take care of them.

Jesus, in verse 23, is referred to as "the head of the church," so He provides and cares for, sustains and watches over, forgives, guides, and leads the church. Marriage is indeed a picture of Christ and the church. There's a couple different places in our text, again, where it refers to as Christ with the church. Any attack on marriage is an attack on God and the image or picture of Christ and His relationship to the church. Verses 24 and 29 imply that the church is a picture of the marriage relationship.

You might also note that a wife's submission to her husband is in the Bible indicated because of creation. I want you to write these verses down. We can't take the time to look at them, but in Genesis 2, we already read that God made the man first and then out of the man He made the woman, who is to be a helper suitable for the man. Write down 1 Corinthians 11:8-12. It's very clear in that passage that the created order supports the concept of the husband being the head of the wife, not culture but creative order which supersedes our culture. In verse 23 of our text, Jesus "...is the saviour of the body," a picture of our redemption in Christ. He's the Savior, the protector, and the provider.

We come to verse 24, the last verse, where we have a summary. That's what that verse is. Notice it starts with, "Therefore," this is the summary, "as the church is subject," or submitted, "unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Wow. He starts with it in verse 22, and for you that are Bible students out there, some manuscripts omit the word submit. It's carried over from verse 21, where he says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God," it just says, "Wives, yourselves unto your own husbands," but mentions it again in verse 24, "...so let the wives be," subject, "to their own husbands in every thing." This is a

summary. There is a sense that you can summarize: the wife's role is submission, the husband's role is love, but a wife is to love her husband. She is to submit to her husband, and notice two things, it's to be continuous. In verse 24, her submission is in what's called the present tense, that is, continually, ongoingly—not just once in a while, but continually.

Sometimes wives will submit to their husbands when it's an area they agree with or they like or they think they're favorable towards. If the husband says, "Let's go out to dinner tonight and buy you a new dress," "Yes, dear, I submit!" If your husband says, "Could you iron my shirt?" "Get behind me, Satan." Seriously, sometimes we pick and choose. "I'll submit here. I'll submit there. I won't submit here. Don't ask me to do that. I'll do this. I'll do that," we pick and choose, but notice the little phrase, "...in every thing."

Let's be clear. "...in every thing," at the end of verse 24 does not mean anything that is unscriptural, unbiblical, ungodly, or unholy. "...in every thing," involves everything in the will of God, in the Word of God, that will glorify God. If your husband asks you to become Bonnie and Clyde and go rob a bank, you say, "I won't do that." If he says, "We want to do this," or "do that," and it's unbiblical, it's unscriptural, it's ungodly, you have a biblical basis, you have a higher authority. In every case, God is the ultimately authority. Amen? So, you won't lie, you won't steal, you won't cheat, you won't commit sinful things with him because your husband asks you to do that. You must obey God rather than man. If he asks you to make some mashed potatoes, then "...in everything." Then, again, husbands should be concerned about the wife's time, feelings, heart, and all that stuff, "...husbands, dwell with them," your wife, "...giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel...that your prayers be not hindered."

Let me get to the third requirement or responsibility for the wife so we can wrap this up. It's down in verse 33. Now, verse 25 starts the husbands role, but at the end, there's another wrap up, and we'll get it more next week. In verse 33, "Nevertheless," here's the grand wrap up, "let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife," here's the wife, "see that she reverence her husband," in the King James Bible. The word "reverence" means respect, so love, submission, and respect. You say, "But, yeah, he's not respectable." It doesn't say he has to be. It means that you should respect your husband. The NIV renders that, "...and the wife must respect her husband."

The Amplified Bible, not too many people pay any attention to the Amplified Bible in these days, but it actually amplifies that quite a lot. It renders that, "...that she notices him and regard him, honor him, prefer him, venerate him, esteem him, that she defers to him, praises him, loves him, and admires him exceedingly." That must've been a committee of all men doing that translation. I say to myself, "That's amplified alright! That thing is about ready to blow up!" He's trying to convey in an amplified version there (that's not a translation by any means) the idea of reverencing or respecting or esteeming, some have, your husband. Why? Because he's the head. You say, "But he's not worthy." Well, the church is not worthy, but Christ loves the church and gave Himself for it.

Remember, too, when you married your husband...you know, I've done a lot of weddings, and

none of them have been shotgun weddings. Never have I seen a shotgun wedding. A wife and a husband always...and sometimes even backstage, before the wedding starts, I say, "This is your last chance to run for the hills. You sure you want to do this?" I'm going to get the men next week, Ladies, so don't worry about that. They're going to get both barrels of the shotgun. You married him. You said, "I do," so you need to make sure that you do what you said you would do. You said, "I will." You said, "I do," and you committed yourself to him in marriage.

I'm a big proponent of traditional vows, "...till death do us part. In sickness and in health, richer for poorer, better or for worse, till death do us part, so help me God." You took a vow before God and before men. Sometimes it's helpful to go back and look at your vows and remember the commitment you promised you would make. I realize there's a lot of issues that come into play in marriage where someone violates their vows or there's infidelity. We're not going to go into divorce, but you can read Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 that deals with that subject. I believe that divorce is God's divine concession to human sin, but He hates divorce. When two individuals fear the Lord, walk in the Spirit, fulfill their roles and their calling in God's Word, they'll find that they have a marriage that will last a lifetime and will be a blessing to them and their children and their children's children.

Let me close this by saying: How should you respect your husband? First of all with your head. How do you think about your husband? In Romans 12, the Bible says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God," so be careful that you're not thinking unbiblically, unscripturally, or in a worldly sense, or that you're not being influenced by the devil to think negatively about your husband. So many times, and I'm just saying from practical purposes, I've seen it happen, where a wife goes out to lunch with the girls from the office and shares some things about her marriage, and the girls say, "Just get rid of the bum! You deserve better. Just divorce him." They start feeding her that poison, and she starts thinking that in her mind. It's a very dangerous scenario. So ask yourselves tonight, Ladies, wives, how do you think about your husband? Do you respect him? Are you disrespectful in your thought life toward your husband? Philippians 4 tells us what we should think about.

Secondly, with your heart you respect him. How do you feel about your husband? Well, you can determine that sometimes by what you say about him with your words. In Matthew 12:34, Jesus said, "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If you're saying things that are negative or critical, you shouldn't criticize or nag your husband, make jokes about, attack, or belittle your husband, and certainly not in front of others.

Thirdly, you should love and respect him with your hands by serving him. Do you do for your husband what God's called you to do? Are you a helper suitable for him? Are you serving your husband? Jesus said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet," certainly a husband to his wife and a wife to her husband. Proverbs 31:13, this woman works willingly with her hands. Again, you might be saying, "Well, I've tried that; it didn't work. I tried that and nothing changed," but your job is to be obedient to God's purpose, plan, and will for you; not for you to read his verses and wait for him to get his act

together. You're to focus on God and what God has called you to do and trust in the Lord that He will take care of you; so, loving your husband, submitting to your husband, and respecting your husband.

Now, with what God calls us to do—listen carefully—God enables us. God never asks us to do anything but what He gives us the ability to do it. When Jesus was in the synagogue in Capernaum, there was a man with a withered hand and he couldn't move his arm or hand, Jesus said to him, "Stretch forth thine hand." The man had to take a step of faith, obey the words of Jesus, and he was able to stretch out his hand and his hand was healed. Whatever God calls you to do, husband or wife, God will give you the ability.

You may be here tonight thinking, I can't do this. It's too difficult. I think the Lord is basically saying, "Stretch forth your hand. Trust Me. Obey Me. Look to Me," and He can do great and mighty things. Amen?