

Live a Good Marriage

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[0 : 0 0] Turn with me for a reading and also for study this morning to our ongoing Examination of first Peter first Peter chapter 2 For those of you who are visiting with us. We've been looking through this letter over the last number of weeks and We've come to this point First Peter chapter 2 sorry first Peter chapter 3 verses 1 to 7 so on page 1 2 1 9 of the pew Bible And it's been in the context. Well, I'll talk about the context when we when we get into it, but Let's read this passage together Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word they may be Won over without words by the behavior of their wives when they see the purity and reverence of your lives Your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as braided hair and the wearing of

Gold jewelry and fine clothes instead. It should be that of the inner your inner self The unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit Which is of great worth in God's sight For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful They were submissive to their own husbands like Sarah who made Abraham and called him her master You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear Husbands in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives Treat them with respect as the weaker partner and his heirs with you of the gracious gift of life So that nothing will hinder your prayers Okay, so this is a passage that I think needs a little bit of unpacking for us today There's a few pejorative terms there for some people and it might be a bit of a wince moment for others I'm quite glad that the Christian feminist movement weekend away isn't with us today

Possibly or maybe not but I want to unpack this passage this morning And I want to start from a different angle Because it's very significant and I think in all of our understanding of scripture It's important that we start from the right place, isn't it?

And I just want you to consider an unexpected visitor today If Jesus Christ the risen Savior walked through that door How would we respond to Him?

Can you imagine that? We would fall on our knees before this clearly visible risen I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended I was going to say ascended But ascended Savior who has come among us We wouldn't go up I don't think anyone would go up to Him Wagging our fingers and say Wait a minute Jesus I don't think your teaching was right in this area Sure, you've got it wrong here I've got a bone to pick with you in different areas I don't think in anything that that would be a response I think when we see the risen Savior The glorified Savior Jesus If He walked through that door We would stand Get out of our pews And fall on our knees

[3 : 4 3] I think that's what we would do That will be the response I don't think anyone will dismiss Him I don't think anyone would dismiss Him Even if you're not Even at this point a believer in Jesus Christ And I think we take that perspective Into our understanding today Of this passage Of our submission And our understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ Of His worthiness Of His goodness Of His power And of His glory And we appreciate within that for us The necessity of faith Because the risen Savior The ascended glorified Savior Isn't walking through the door We're asked to believe in Him by faith We're asked to hold on to the realities Of the Christ who lived and died and rose again By faith, we're asked to accept

That He is who He is We don't see Him walking through the door But we're asked by faith to believe that And this whole letter Of which we've been unfolding Has been in the perspective Of those who have come to faith And who have submitted to Jesus Christ in faith As you come to Him verse 4 of chapter 2 The living stone rejected by men Chosen by God Precious to Him and Precious to us It's in that context of knowing who He is And last week, if you remember We looked at submission to Him In the context of the political arena In the context of society In the context of the workplace And

we saw that that submission to Him came First through the internal battle To put Him as Lord of our lives Therefore, rid yourself, chapter 2 Of all malice and deceit

That recognition that we do an internal Submission in our own soul And that from that flows our attitudes To the way we live, to ambition, to work To society, to politics And in this case, to marriage To marriage To wives and husbands this passage It's a follow on, you know We're reading it separately New chapter, new theme But it's not, it was all written as one And this is just a continuation of the theme of submission Within society, within our lives And it's a reminder to us And I'm going to repeat this because I think it's so important Repeat this from last week, I'm sorry for being repetitive But whose authority are we under this morning In our lives?

You see, when we reject Jesus Christ It's not that we're rejecting all authority We're rejecting His authority We're rejecting His lordship But it doesn't mean that we're rejecting all lordships Because we're all submissive, aren't we?

We're all submissive either to our own intellects To current norms of society To current thinking, to ideology Or whatever it might be But Christ claims are strong, aren't they?

[7 : 03] Walk through the door He claims are strong Creator God Giver, sustainer of life God The good God The just God The loving, redeeming God The God to whom we are accountable He's strong claims to our lordship You choose and may choose not to make Him Lord And we choose by an actions to reflect Who is our Lord and to whom we are submissive But the authority of Christ is significant As believers for us And so I ask the question because you may come to a chapter like this As a woman, or as a husband or wife You may come with struggles You may come with difficulty, huge ideological difficulties Possibly with the whole idea of submission But I'm saying, I'm asking as I introduce this A kind of longer introduction, shorter exegesis

I'm asking in our struggles of faith Whether it's on this issue or on a million of other issues That we might come up with On whom are we dependent Because faith is about being dependent, isn't it? Being dependent on Christ And in our struggles Who do we go to and who do we need most? Can I just take some examples from life in general? When we struggle with serious illness in our lives Is it that we need less medical intervention or more?

We need more When we're struggling with fitness, is it less exercise? No, it's more exercise we need When we're weak with hunger, it's more food we need When we're struggling in relationships And in love with our family and all that goes on in family Is it that we abandon them and turn away from them?

No, it's more time we need to spend with them It's more time we need to engage For exhausted this morning, what is it that you need? You need more bed, you need your rest more You need sleep more, not less sleep when you're exhausted And in our faith struggles, what is it we need more of?

[9 : 07] It's more Christ we need, not less And you see, there's an interesting response here Because very often in our Christ struggles, or our faith struggles We walk away from Him You see, wah, it's not what I expected And in the struggles we walk away Rather than looking for Him more, we look for Him less We walk away, in our backslidings, in our difficulties In our doubts, in our fears The natural reaction for us is to walk away from Christ And yet, what we need is more of Christ We need to be soaked in Him and in His Word and in prayer And in that relationship with Him That is what it is, isn't it?

For relationship struggles, it needs to be worked at And that's no different spiritually In a relationship with the living God Because what influences us Will be our worldview and what we spend time with And if you're greatly influenced by non-Christian Or un-Christian philosophical thinking And if you soak yourself in that Then the struggles will be for you To come to terms with the Lordship of Christ and what He says So we need more of Christ I must bed this in Christ This isn't moralism This isn't about our understanding of men and women Say in society, this must be grounded in our submission to Christ And in our understanding of the worldview that He offers to us And so He moves, having submitted our hearts to Christ And the battles within there, on an ongoing basis

He talks about society and He talks about the workplace And here He talks about marriage Submission in Christian marriage Isn't about equality And it's not about ability In Galatians 3, verse 28 There is neither dune or Greek slave Nor free male nor female For you are all one in Jesus Christ If you belong to Christ Then your Abram seed and heirs according to the promise It's clear, it's just one of the passages that is clear about that It's not about equality and it's not about ability We were men and women, male and female created from the dust We were created equal We were

created in God's image together Male and female We were complementary in relationship And in Christ He says

Neither nationality nor status nor gender We are equal, we are heirs together Joint heirs with Jesus Christ As we were told in this passage That we are heirs together in verse 7 It's not about equality and it's not about ability And that may well be true in the society submission That we're asked to give And in the workplace submission It's not necessarily about the superiority Or about the ability or about any type of equality Of those who are in a position of authority over us In fact quite often it might be the opposite It's about recognizing God's structure And God's pattern within the world in which we live So we find here that we have God given roles Within the marriage context

I'll speak about that briefly God given roles within Christian marriage Where the husband is to reflect the servant leadership Of Jesus Christ Ephesians 5, 25 speaks about that That we're to love our wives like Christ loves the church And gave himself up for her So servant leadership is part of the role of the husband Leading that marital relationship into spiritual help Spiritual health, spiritual wholeness Leading that relationship in a spiritual way Where the wife is to support and partner in this Submitting to your husband's God given role That role of being a humble servant within a partnership Someone has put it this way I'm not sure of little anecdotally type pictures But maybe it helps that the husband is the thermostat

[13 : 56] Of the relationship setting the spiritual temperature The woman is the thermometer in the relationship Knowing the spiritual temperature So there's this sense in which there's a joint complementary role That God has given where we learn from one another And together we have a spiritual relationship is There's a teamwork where Christ is Lord of all Submissive to Christ and following through Christ's roles And partners for us, recognising this whole idea And it's interesting really within it that there's submission In both parts But there's a role of spiritual leadership for the husband Now, that creates I'm sure for some of you some problems Maybe for some husbands, maybe for some wives And it highlights I think for us an internal Christian battle

I know a lot of scripture will do that for us Because our sinful selfishness Militates against the idea of serving one another And the core of sin is always about putting ourselves first And putting ourselves right at the very centre of our own thinking And we've seen right from the beginning of scripture That that's the case isn't it?

The moment that humanity turns away from the submission to Christ And his lordship We find that Adam and Eve come into conflict with one another And Adam and Eve's family come into conflict with one another And the word in which we live we see violence, division And blame and dysfunction coming into relationships in the very beginning So that the husband in his struggles may well be Struggling against abusing his position Domineering in his role Which is quite ungodly and quite unbiblical Whether it be physically, sexually or mentally abusing his strength Misusing his strength I think that is the context of the wife being the weaker partner In verse 7 I think it's absolutely, generally speaking The physical relationship, the physical weaker than the make-up of the man

Because it's not other weakness is it? We know as poor men know that women are much stronger in bearing pain We know they're much stronger in many ways mentally and often emotionally Apart from chick flicks And there's a mixture in women I think of And I'm really on dangerous ground here I know, I know, I know I'm moving on from it quickly But there is, is there not a kind of emotional vulnerability mixed With a kind of psychological steel It's a bit of both there, can I say that?

Okay, to say that There is in some senses an emotional vulnerability And certainly a physical vulnerability Where there is abuse and where there is wrong sinful dominance Men can neglect the servant leadership They can neglect the right spirit and the right attitude They can neglect their families They can neglect their responsibilities How often will it be that the man leaves the wife and children For selfish self-centered gain?

[17 : 55] It's not often that we see it the other way around Because there's great sinful selfishness A lack of taking leadership A lack of taking responsibility A lack of involvement in the family A lack of involvement with the children A lack of care and consideration of practical, tangible partnership Within the marriage, an abuse of position, an abuse of strength And abuse of what God has said is the role that they play So husbands can be abusive of that And that's the battle that we all struggle with Not just in marriage but generally And wives can also be, Christian wives can be resentful Of Christ's model and what Christ says Maybe sometimes accepting what isn't biblical Accepting people's interpretation of it Accepting the world's interpretation Which is an interpretation without

faith And without submission to Christ And without the recognition of all the other submission That is spoken of here in society and in the workplace

And all that goes with it And sometimes wives can be resentful of the authority of Scripture And dismiss it as simply old fashioned Without wrestling with the wider picture of God's role And God's model of marriage that He gives to us And wives can be resentful by being controlling In the same way, I guess, that husbands can So we have these struggles and battles with God's model And God's picture And we have His role that He lays out here for Christian marriage And briefly as we close, we have the context here The first six verses speak about primarily Speak about wives who have become Christians In a relationship where at one time The wife and the husband, neither of them were Christians And speaking about how a Christian wife Is to react in a marriage where the husband is not a Christian

You see, there was new found freedom In the days that this New Testament epistle was written For women who became Christians And in the worship of Christ, they were no longer shackled They were no longer enslaved They were free in Jesus Christ, that was the teaching And there was a sense in which maybe they felt I just want to be free from everything And from this rotten marriage And the fact that maybe there was a temptation to To reject Christ's teaching and certain things But also there was also probably some very difficult tense situations Where the husband, mainly as Roman Under, certainly the Roman Empire at the time Would believe in many gods And would say, well why don't you just have your Christ As one of the many gods? Why is He exclusive?

Why is He your Lord? Why can't you worship other gods? There's lots of gods we can share And there was this exclusivity And there was much tension in the home And maybe a fear in the husband's part That the wife would leave or loved someone more Than him or whatever it might be The belief system, the religion of the day Would cause great tensions and great problems Within the marriage and Peter speaking into that situation As he's saying, just walk away You're Christ now, forget about your husband who's not a believer Just walk away, it's okay, he's rubbish anyway He doesn't believe he's rejected the Gospel No, he's reminding them of the whole model The role of submission under Christ Even where the husband isn't a believer Because through that lifestyle and that way of living The may well be that the partner would be redeemed

Would come to know Christ themselves And he speaks about the importance And it's really just going back to some of his previous teaching About living a good life So that those that you're living among Are massively influenced by it That you know, live such good lives among the pagans That though they accuse you of doing wrong They may see your good deeds and glorify God in the day of visits He's just going back to that teaching and saying to the wives Listen, the society in which you live Puts everything, the wives and the women in the society Which you put everything in outward appearance But looking beautiful, they spend Women, wives would spend hours and hours and hours beautifying themselves Doing up their hair, putting expensive jewels and things in their hair And kind of competing with one another on this level of beauty Outward beauty, nothing wrong with adornment But what Peter is saying is This is not where your identity lies

[22 : 53] Your identity doesn't lie in your outward beauty And that's not where the battle lies He says for you, the battle lies in recognizing The inner beauty that you have The inner beauty of submitting to Christ And modelling your life on Him and looking like Him It's the perspective of this wife Who is living in a difficult tense situation Living a life of spiritual beauty And that goes beyond Advice for wives in that situation It's advice in many ways for us all When we're in a situation where we're close to someone who's not a believer It really, Peter is saying, don't nag them into the kingdom Don't keep nagging on about things Because that'll just put them off He says, if any of you, if any of them do not believe the word That is the gospel which they've heard Because their wives have become Christians They may be one over without words

It's the different words that are used there in the Greek The word is the logos The truth, the gospel And the words are just the conversation So he's saying, look, don't keep on at them Because it'll just put them off You know, sometimes you hear of a Christian partner Who will put a Christian radio on the background in sermons And blast it out really loud all the time So they're just hearing the gospel all the time Yeah!

Send them nuts Because it's the inner life of beauty That is so powerful Of a gentle, of unfading beauty Gentle and quiet spirit Which is so powerful Submitting even where the husband isn't a believer To the supportive role in living moral beauty For Samuel, speaks about that, doesn't it?

For Samuel 16, verse 7 God looks on the inside, we look on the surface God looks on the inside That's a really significant, I think Even apart from this passage today That's an important message for us In a shallow society that we live in Skin-deep society An airbrushed society A manufactured society It's all about image and what we look like on the outside And how we appear to others Jesus says, I'm not really that interested in that I'm interested in what we're like morally And our characters from the inside and how that Will be reflected in our lives The power of a good life again That's what he's speaking about Our identity is in Christ It's not in our politics It's not in our ambitious work placement Or the role we have in the workplace It's not even who we're married to And the wonder of our marriage It's our identities in Christ And all of these things subserve To our identity in Jesus So we submit to Jesus and that's reflected In our focus and in our perspective And where we spend our time And how we spend our time in our marriages And in our workplaces And in our society So there's this great emphasis of putting Christ's Lordship into play And this one hour isn't that important And I say that guardedly I know worship is massively significant And I know coming together is massively significant But what I'm saying is this isn't your priority Oh, I must go and have my one hour of church today It's what we take, it's how we're equipped from here To live under the submission of Christ Week to week for the other 24-7 periods of our lives

[26 : 45] This is the engine room, is it? This is the springboard from which we live The rest of our lives Of course we worship, but also our lives must be worshiped So being a Christian wife And also, of course, being a Christian husband And the last verse speaks about that Husband in the same way being considerate As you live with your wives and so on The advice to live with your wife In Christian marriage with a servant spirit Serving, doing the very best Working out, being devoted, being considerate Being in partnership, not being an absent husband Absent from your wife, absent in the relationship Absent from the children if you have children But they're taking on board What the way of responsibility you've been given Trusting in the relationship Treating your wife as a precious partner

An heir of grace holding hands alongside one another In this great teamwork that we have voluntarily And freely entered into under the lordship of Jesus Christ So that in our relationships, in our marriages We can pray together and our prayers will not be hindered I think that whole end of this And it's not obviously all the biblical teaching in this area But speaking about prayer, just a reflection of our perspective Where the source of our wisdom and of our life And of our thinking comes from And of the grace we need to be Christian husbands The grace we need to be Christian wives The grace we need to be forgiving and forgiven The grace to be under his lordship And if I had one longing for my ministry One longing, it would be that we are a community of praying people One major longing If I could leave this place And know that God had made us a praying people Praying wives and husbands Praying city groups Praying together on a Wednesday evening Coming together to pray Not as an end in itself But because it reflects our submission To this Christ that we need so badly Because he's so gracious and he's so good If you walk through the door Would it put everything into perspective for us today?

One day we will fall on our knees to worship him For some of us it might be sooner than others We will do that Are we living in the light of that Of his lordship, his glory And of the fact that when we will see him And when he puts out his hands to us He'll be nail pierced We will always be reminded of the cross We will always say this is how much I loved you Were you able to live for me In your marriage, in your workplace In society Were you able to live for me?

That's who we must see, we must see Jesus Let's bow our heads and pray Heavenly Father we ask and pray That you would guide us You'd lead us in these difficult passages sometimes That on the face of it reflect A way of thinking that is so different From the world in which we live And the thinking of society and of men and women today But as we see it under your lordship And with the model of Christ Of service, of giving our all for one another Then we see its beauty And we see its wonder Help us to remember and to remind ourselves That our identity is in Jesus Not just for the hour that we're here Not just because we were brought up in Christian homes But because we've taken Jesus as our lord and savior

[31 : 12] We are part of the body of Christ We're redeemed and we are endowed by His living Holy Spirit May that give us dignity And a sense of significance, worth, belonging Forgiveness, joy and help And may that be the foundation of our lives As we've sought to apply this letter As we've sought to see the foundation laid At the beginning of this letter of Jesus And of His grace and peace

Help us we pray, guide us by your Spirit Teach us through your Spirit And may we be led and be willing to hear What you have to say to us For we ask it in His precious name Amen