

# “THE CONSIDERATION OF GODLY MEN”

## HOLINESS

1 Peter 3:7 Lesson #17

DR. BRUCE BICKEL

February 27, 2015

**Bruce:** Good morning, men!

**Men:** Good morning!

**Bruce:** I thank Bishop Jones for a wonderful message last week. Thank you for inspiring us. (*Applause.*) It's great to have Carl with us. Thank you.

As I was getting dressed this morning, and I got peachy today—my four-and-a-half or five-hour, once a week deal; I was doing it three days a week, now I'm down to one day a week—I'm not sure if that's mercy or grace), (*laughter.*) As I was getting dressed today, something really kind of struck me. You know, I'm getting ready to go and take care of my body. You know, the body of Christ, men, is suffering around the world.

**Participant:** Come on, sir!

**Bruce:** Do you realize that?

And one of the things is that I just spent a week with my wife, because this is her week to go down to the Virgin Islands to visit my friend Tom. And I had a lot of time on my hands, and I just got to thinking, you know, I hope we never become complacent here on Friday. We have such a good thing going. I mean, just take a look at the fellowship we have, the joy that we have in getting to know one another, and how the Lord teaches through His Holy Spirit. We've got something here that's really unique. But I just pray that we don't become complacent.

You know, the body of Christ is suffering, men. We've got two hundred and some Assyrian believers likely going to be executed in the next couple of days.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Bruce:** And we talk about, and are griping about being cold. We need to take our responsibilities seriously. We belong to a body, men.

**Participant:** We do.

**Bruce:** It's not about us! It's not about me and my physical deliverance, or yours, or yours, or the cold weather here in Pittsburgh. It's about the kingdom of God and the glory of His body. And His body is suffering worldwide, and we're a part of that.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** We are a part of the body of Christ, and we need to take seriously our union with our brothers and sisters, even though we don't know who they are, because that's part of the Kingdom operation. And so, before we get into our study today, I just want us to take a few minutes to just pray for the body of Christ, however the Lord is pleased to do that. Would you just pray? Would some of you verbalize your own prayers? And then I'm just going to ask Don to close us.

But we need to take seriously our responsibility to be members of the kingdom of God, and members of the body of Christ. Christ's body is suffering, men. It's suffering around the world, and we're a part of that, even if just in our prayer life. So let's take this seriously, and don't become complacent about what we have. But take seriously our

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responsibility. We’re part of a body, and that is the kingdom of God and the body of Christ. So let’s just pray as the Lord would lead, and then Don, in a few minutes, would you close us?

**Don:** Yes.

**Bruce:** Heavenly Father, we come into Your presence, because we’re already there. And Father, we know that Your body is suffering. Just teach us how to pray. We don’t even know what to ask for sometimes, at least I don’t. But Father, I know that You have a body. Christ’s body is suffering; it’s for Your glory, and we just don’t know how to figure that confusion out. So in these moments, Father, hear our prayers, as we just offer You our concerns for Your body, to the glory of Christ.

**Participant:** Father God, we thank You for the opportunity to come before You as a bunch of men.

**Second Participant:** Amen.

**Participant:** We thank You for this leadership that we have under Bruce. You equip him so well. Father, may we not take everything lightly everything that we’ve learned here. But may we apply everything that we do, not having knowledge for knowledge’s sake, but knowledge for application’s sake, that we would truly and prayerfully consider these lost souls, these walking dead that are amongst us. The glory is that these two hundred Christian brothers and sisters that are taken, and are likely to be put to death, they will come to glory. But their enemies won’t. they’re dying and going to hell. There are so many around us that are dying and going to hell. But by Your grace, and by Your love, by no work of our own, You’ve called us, and You’ve chosen us, and You’ve loved us. Father, may we be worthy of that love by displaying Your glory, by reaching out to others, out of gratitude for what You’ve given us. May we truly transform this world, and may we stop being part of this world, molded by this world, and not even realizing what we’re to do. How different we are called to be! May we truly be aliens, Father, that people would see the radical difference in us, that we would be radically loving, doctrinally pure, and truly live out that life in You. Forgive us for where we fall short, when we put work and material things in front of our children, that we’re not daily raising up our children in the fear and admonition of You, that we might not abdicate our discipline of the kids, that we’re not leading our lives in love and service. Teach us. Guide us. Allow us to dive into Your word more and more every day, that, when we’re called to be persecuted, when we live a life that calls for persecution because they see the righteousness in us—if people are persecuting us,—and Father, this is where I’m falling short,—I’m not living radically, righteously enough, that people see that much of a difference in me that they are persecuting me. So Father, may I be transformed, and come alongside my brothers here, to help them along the way. We thank You, Father, for Your Son Jesus, and what His intercession is doing for us every single second, how He’s standing up for us, and allowing us to be pure, that we can truly rest in Thee.

**Participant:** Thank You, Lord, for the twenty-one who were beheaded just a few weeks ago because they were Christians. Thank You for their example. Thank You for their strength. Lord, we ask that You bless their families, and bless this family, and Yours worldwide. And all of our hearts ache, and are sickened, by the thoughts of things that

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are occurring there, in the Middle East, where the twenty-one were parading through the streets in cages. One was burned to death in video tapes, for the sake of gathering more sick people that are snuffing out the lives of Christians and others, Lord, that love You. Lord, give us the strength, as we go through our day, as we are attacked in such little things, and yet so often, we don't stand up for it. Give us the words. Give us the thoughts. Give us what we need, Lord, to raise our families up to be strong Christian men, and guide us this day. Amen.

**Participant:** Lord, I ask you too, for the over two thousand Christian men who are forming an army over there, that You are ready to give them the love they need, in Your mercy, and not just to respond in anger, but to respond appropriately. Protect their Christian families, their land, and do it in a way that shows Your love.

**Don:** Father, in this country of freedom and affluence, it's so easy for us to forget the words of our Savior, that if they hated Him, they will hate us also.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** It is so easy for us to forget the words that He said. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And blessed are you when men insult you, and despise you, and speak all manner of evil against you for My sake. For great is your reward in heaven.” Father, we have become so complacent, and we think that if someone gives us a verbal dig, or we don't get the promotion that we want, or whatever, that that's persecution. And we have no idea, Father, of what Your people are enduring throughout the world. Father, I just pray for these people who are about to be executed, Lord. I pray for all of those in the Middle East, and in Communist countries, Lord, who are persecuted and tortured, and beaten, and near death, for one reason, because they dare to name the name of Christ.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Don:** Father, we pray that You would help them, Lord, to just lean upon Christ, that You would give them strength and that You would give them courage, that You would give them, Father, just a deeper love and confidence in You that only this kind of suffering can bring. Father, we just pray, Lord, even for their persecutors, that, Lord Jesus, as You did with the apostle Paul,

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** That You would do with these terrorists, those who are of Your elect, that You would help them, and bring them to repentance. Bring them to their knees, in whatever way You choose to do it, heavenly Father, that they would come from darkness into light.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Don:** Father, we pray for Your suffering church, your persecuted church worldwide. And Father, even though our suffering is minuscule, Lord, we do pray for all of us who may be in situations where we're called to share our faith, and are attacked for it, Lord. When we think of those, Father, who are losing their businesses because they dare to stand up for what Your word says in regard to marriage, or whatever. But Father, in all these things, Lord, we ask You to help us never to forget to pray, and to do what we can for the suffering of Your dear saints. And now, Father, we pray that You would anoint

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Bruce, as He teaches us today through Your holy word, for we pray in Jesus’ name.  
Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Thank, you, men. I invite you to open your Bibles to the book of 1 Peter chapter three. We’re continuing our study on the concept of holiness.

Remember this, that doctrine precedes practice. That’s why you’ll always find doctrine preceding the application of the Scripture.

Peter has been teaching us about the doctrine of submission—submission as citizens, submission as employers, submission as husband and wife, and submission in the church. The concept of submission is something that is a doctrine that is part of the Christian faith. And so we now come to some application points. Let’s pick it up at 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 1-7.

Now let me say this just as an introduction. When the church loses its separation from the system of this world, we’re no longer Christian. When the church loses its distinctiveness of separation from the system of this world, when we lose that, the church is no longer Christian. It’s just a nice activity that is not contrasting with the system of this world. And we’re going to deal with a subject right now that is contrary to human nature, contrary to the system of this world. So it’s going to take us several weeks to go through this, because I want you to understand the doctrine and theology of the family.

There is probably some area in the world where we have compromised, as much as anything else, and that’s how we’re raising our families, and the way we treat our wives.

**Participant:** Preach it, sir!

**Bruce:** So we’re going to enter into something that is very, very critical. And the point is this. When we lose our distinctiveness from the world, and we’re not severed from the world, we’re no longer Christian. We’re just a nice activity that looks like the culture, an Americanized version of something. That is not what we’re called to be.

I’m just overwhelmed with Christ’s suffering body around the world, and how they are maintaining their distinctiveness because of their faith. And I just pray, men, that you and I will never become complacent because we’ve got such a good thing going here. Never let us take advantage of that. So let’s read the Scripture from 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 1-7.

“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the Word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear. But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very, very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him “lord.” And you are her children, if you do good, and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

This is the word of the Lord.

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**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Bruce:** Now I’m not going to spend a whole lot of time on verses 1-6, because it has to do with wives. And the last thing you need to hear is somebody telling you what your wife ought to be.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** What you need to hear is verse 7.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** You and I need to hear what God tells us what we need to be as husbands. Let’s forget what our wives should be, and concentrate on what we need to be. So I’m not going to talk much about the first six verses. If your wives would let me preach to them, I would walk them through verses 1-6. And I would not deal with verse 7 in their presence, just as I won’t deal with verses 1-6 in your presence. You don’t need to hear about what the Scripture says that a woman should be. You need to hear what God says that a man needs to be, so that the woman can be all that God calls her to be.

Now I do want to give you just some brief comments about this as an introduction. I believe that it’s the present conceit of each believing generation that their view of the world and society is different, and the present generation is no exception. Christians in our age need to remember that modern mankind, despite all of our technology, despite all of our education, we’re still doing the same things. Despite all of our heralded sophistication, we merely continue the old age drama, the tradition of suppressing the truth of God, exchanging it for a lie, which renders the creature the object of worship rather than the Creator.

Now we don’t think that our culture is as bad as the others used to be. Each successive generation has a conceit that says, “We’ve figured it all out.”

**Participant:** Mm-hmm.

**Bruce:** And as a result, that’s why I made this statement, that when the church loses its distinctiveness in the world, we’re no longer Christian, because we think that, in our sophistication and our education, we’ve figured out all these things.

One of the areas where we’ve really blown it, in my judgment, is the area of the family. We’ve socialized the family to look just like the system of this world. When was the last time you heard that a wife was told to be submissive? You can’t do that in the church, because it’s going to offend the women. You see, that has been going on for generations. You know, we think that we can create something called Biblical feminism, and that it’s going to take care of everything. Or we can create something called male chauvinism, and we’ve created something.

You see, we’re no different from the world. And yet the Scripture makes it very clear that we’ve got to be different from the world.

And so let me just give you a quick overview of these first six verses, and I won’t go into this in detail. But remember this. In 1 Peter, it starts off with the character of our salvation, the claims of our salvation, and the conduct of the saved.

When it comes to women, in verses 1-6, Peter gives us three reasons why they need to be submissive to their husbands. I’m not going to go into this in detail, but I want to give

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you a quick overview, because it helps us to understand that we need to put them into a position to want to do that!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** And if we don't treat them in a way that would make them want to do that, they're not going to want to do it, because, by human nature, they don't want to do that. And I'll get into that theologically in a moment, as we look at the consequences of the Fall.

But basically, Peter is saying this. Peter gives three reasons why submissiveness on the part of the wives reveals the holiness in the home. Here are three reasons, just quickly.

It's an ordinance. It's a heavenly ordinance (verse 1.) “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands.” That's a heavenly ordinance. There is reason number one.

Reason number two, it's an earthly opportunity. Look at verses 1 and 2. “So that even if some do not obey the Word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives.” That's an earthly opportunity. There's a heavenly ordinance, and then there's an earthly opportunity.

And thirdly, probably most important, is this. There is a spiritual ornament, and you'll see that in verses 3-6. “When they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of the hair, the putting on of gold jewelry,” and so forth. “But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit.”

You see, men, for women there is a heavenly ordinance—be submissive. That's a direction from heaven. It's not a choice. It's not an opinion. It's something God says. If you want to be distinctly different from the world, you've got to do this. And the moment you quit doing that, you're no longer Christian, as a movement.

The second thing he says is that it's an earthly opportunity. You might just win one of your lost husbands because of your conduct, not your mouth. It's a heavenly opportunity.

And then, thirdly, it's a spiritual ornament. You're decorated in a beautiful thing that calls attention to the glory and the Person and work of Christ.

Notice this. “For this is how the holy women of old who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands.”

Three things I would teach your wives if I were here. I'm not going to go into more detail than this. But I want to give you the understanding of this, because the next thing is this. “Likewise.”

**Participant:** That's right.

**Bruce:** Now that means everything that God just told the women likewise needs to be in us!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** We need to realize that this is also a heavenly ordinance. This is also an earthly opportunity. It's also a spiritual ornament of how we are looking, how we are dressed, and how we come across.

**Participant:** Amen.

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**Bruce:** And the moment, men, that the church of Jesus Christ loses its distinctiveness, and the separation from the system of this world, we’re no longer Christian. We’re just something that is socially active in our culture, but it’s no longer Christian. And it probably begins most of all right in the family, because what have we done? We’ve rationalized, thinking that our education and our sophistication, and all the technology we have, that we’ve figured all this out and we need to liberate women, and call it “women’s liberation.” That’s contrary to the Scripture! Likewise, so is male chauvinism. It’s not a dictatorship. It’s servanthood.

A servant is someone who does something for someone else and expects nothing in return. That’s the role of the husband! “Likewise.” So the reason that I want you to understand verses 1-6 is that because the key word for us is “likewise.” That’s verse 7.

So let’s pick it up with “likewise,” inverse 7. “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman, as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Why is it that we have quarrels? Why is it that we have fights? Turn with me to James chapter 4, at verse 1.

“What causes fights and quarrels among you?” James asks that question. “Don’t they come from your desires or your passions that are within you?”

What causes fights? What causes quarrels in the home? “Don’t they come from the passions and the desires that are within you?” James is asking that question. He also gives the answer.

The word *fight* means any open antagonism. What causes any open antagonism in the house, in the home? It comes from our desires, from our passions, James tells us. The answer is “Don’t they come from your desires and your passions?” The word *passions* is a word that means that pleasure and happiness is the chief goal of life, and nothing will come in place of accomplishing that goal. It’s the word *hedonism*. It means that the pleasures and happiness of life become the direction of my life.

My wife is a pediatrician. So often she is frustrated about parents who are afraid to discipline their children.

**Participant:** Mm-hmm.

**Bruce:** Because they want to make them happy!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Your role as a parent is not to make your children happy. For the first six years, it’s to establish the right to rule. From six to twelve, it’s a coach, to teach them how to act. Then you’re a mentor. Then you’re their friend, when they’re older. Parenthood is friendship when they’re twenty-one, not when they’re six.

We’ve lost this concept of discipline. Discipline is not a foreign word to the Scripture. It’s something that we must understand.

So James is asking a very important question for us. Why is it that we have quarrels? Don’t they come from the pleasures that we have? You and I are always seeking, our wives and children are always seeking, pleasure and happiness. He says that it comes from those desires, and we don’t let anything get in the way of our becoming happy, or seeking our own pleasure.

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A modern marriage is often a battleground. Unfortunately, the death is often slow, and it's often painful. And as in any war situation or antagonistic environment, people suffer needlessly, and especially the children.

Now basically, the problem is this. It's the struggle with sin. The basic problem in the family is not culturalism. It's struggling with sin. The great hope of marriage is that Christ came to take away the sin of the world, and to give us hope.

Now I want to explain why I made the statement that the problem is sin in marriage. That's where quarrels and anger comes from. It's not psychological damage. It's not victimization. It's sin! The real problem is just dealing with sin in the woman and sin in the man.

Now let me give you an understanding of this. Now bear with me. So I want to take you to the book of Genesis. I want you to understand something before the Fall. It's important that we understand that doctrine precedes our practice. So open your Bibles to the book of Genesis. It's going to take us a while to go through this, so bear with me. Take some notes.

I want you to see the creation account, beginning at chapter 1, verse 27. We're told that God created men and women both, in God's image. That means they were like God, in a sense. They were a spiritual being, they were a moral being, and they were intellectual in likeness to God. It doesn't mean that they took on all of His attributes. This doesn't mean that. It means that they had some sense of a spiritual part of their life. There was a moral part of their life, and there was an intellectual part of their life, in that they were like God. And men and women were created in God's image, we're told.

The equality of personhood is established at creation, and that's critical to understand. The equality of personhood is established at creation.

And then you go to chapter 2, verse 7. We see that man was created first. Paul reaffirms that creation ordinance in 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 13. It's what we call theologically the position of the primogenitor, the firstborn. The firstborn had special rights and responsibilities because of the progenitor position, the firstborn.

Adam was created before Eve. That's the doctrine, the doctrine of primogeniture. There are certain responsibilities that he alone has that distinctively make him different from the created woman, the special rights and responsibilities.

Now in chapter 2, verse 18, woman was made as a helper for man. Man was created as head; woman was created as helper. That's the beginning of our doctrinal position. Paul reaffirms that also in 1 Corinthians 11:9. So this is not contrary to the New Testament; it's being affirmed by the New Testament. They do not combat each other in this issue, the primogeniture, or distinctive responsibilities in the family. There is the equality of person that is affirmed, but there is a difference in their roles. Equality of position, but difference in roles. Woman is the helper; man is the head.

Now that is a creation ordinance that is affirmed all over the New Testament. It's something that is lost in our churches because we don't want to offset women's liberation. And we're afraid to preach this in the church because women won't like it.

It's the greatest freedom that anyone could discover! If you want to know what female abuse is, go to the Middle East. Find out what's happening to those women who



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are sold into slavery. They're like chattel. They're like cattle. They're like goats. They're like dogs. And yet we have the audacity to say that American Christianity is offensive to women. Christianity is the most liberating thing that ever happened to a woman, because it gives them equal positional status, but distinctive responsibilities. That's a creation ordinance.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Then we go to chapter 2, verses 19-23. I want you to see that the equality of personhood is already established, with the introduction of a distinctiveness in responsibility, and we see that in a more clarified way in chapter 2, verses 19-23.

We see the difference in function. Notice. Adam names the animals, and he also names Eve. Look at chapter 3, verse 20.

Now in Hebrew thought, naming is the prerogative of a superior position. Naming is the responsibility and prerogative of a superior position. It's the prerogative of the firstborn. It's a superior position of authority, but not in the value of personhood. You need to understand the difference. It is superior in the position of authority—primogeniture—but not in the value of the person being named.

Now here's how it works. God exercises this prerogative of naming when He named Adam in Genesis chapter 1. He names things He created. You see God doing that. The man shares in this opportunity, in that he names the animals over which he has dominion. Man shares in this opportunity of naming because God is the One who made the things that He created. He said, “It is good,” and then He gives man the responsibility to name the animals. So he is joining in with God in that responsibility of naming things. Man shares in that responsibility because of his primogenitor relationship.

Now when God brings the woman to man, when he gives her her name, he is demonstrating his God-given headship and unique responsibility. Do you understand that? He's demonstrating his uniqueness as the head of creation because he is the primogenitor, the firstborn.

But there's more to this. In the act of naming her, he also demonstrates the equality in harmony that exists between man and woman. Yes, he names her Woman, but in doing so he establishes the greatest intimacy that he could have with another created being, and here is how that works.

Adam's name in Hebrew is *Ish*. He called the woman *Ishah*. That's Woman. Now notice what that means. It's a primary form of his own name. He's giving her part of his own name—*Ish* and *Ishah*.

And that means this. When the name giver places his own name upon the person named, the giving of that name signifies the joining of two persons in the closest unity and harmony they can ever have.

Distinctive of position, but equal value of personhood. And that is clarified right here in the naming of Eve by Adam. He says, in effect, “I'm going to give you a name that's part of me, and it's going to mean that we're going to have the identity of the closest harmony and unity that we can have together, because you're part of me, because I have the responsibility of naming you, and I'm giving you part of myself in the name I'm giving you.” That was his unique responsibility. He valued her by giving her part of his

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own being, part of his own position, by giving her part of his own name. In so doing, he established her value as a person.

So when a superior thus exercised his authority of name giving, the giving of the name signified the appointment of the person named to have some unique position or responsibility. In naming her woman, he gave her a very unique responsibility, and that was to be helper. That’s part of her being; it’s part of her name; it’s part of her creation ordinance. He exercised his responsibility, but he gave her a name that united her with him in such a unique relationship that it cannot be separated,. Because it’s part of himself. There is no closer way that Adam could be related to Eve than by his giving her the name woman.

That’s all doctrine, positionally. So two things we need to understand, the headship of man, and the helping of the woman. Different functions by creation, and equal in persons by creation. Equal by creation, distinctive in the roles by creation.

Now are you following with me so far? Any questions so far, because I want to get into some application of this. Yes, sir?

**Participant:** What does “ah” mean, the “ah” at the end?

**Bruce:** His name is *Ish*—I-s-h. When he puts a-h, he’s saying, “I’m giving you part of my own name. Yes, Ted?”

**Ted:** *Ah* at the end of a Hebrew word is the female form.

**Bruce:** It’s the feminine version of the word Adam.

**Ted:** So I would say that he didn’t give her part of who he was. He gave her all of who he was.

**Bruce:** Absolutely.

**Ted:** We see the female version of this. You find this in many languages, the *ah* sound. That makes the female version of the word.

**Bruce:** It’s the feminization of the word Adam. And that’s why I said that it gave the two of them the greatest unity and harmony and closeness they could have, because he gave her part of himself as part of his own name.

Now, in summary, all this leads to this. The headship of the man by creation, the helper of the woman by creation,—equal personhood, distinctive responsibilities.

**Participant:** I was kind of curious, that we’re talking about this today. I was doing some studying and listening to some sermons online, and he pointed this out in verse 18 of Genesis 2. So in Genesis 2:18 it says, (and this is talking about the creation of man), “It is not good that man should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him.” And that’s the only time—and I never noticed this before,—that’s the only time in God’s creation where He doesn’t say, “And it is good. It is good.” You know, that was the one thing where He said that it isn’t good, and He created a help mate. And it got me to thinking about what you point out. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one. Yet there are different roles, and They all have to submit to one another. And if you would look at husband/wife, that one union, that one flesh, creates a child. That’s almost in Their image, all of our souls to do that. And if we do that family right, that really starts to show the mirror of the Trinity of God.

**Bruce:** Absolutely. God always works through a chain of command.

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**Participant:** Yes, He does.

**Bruce:** God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. What the Father ordains,

**Men:** The Son accomplishes. The Holy Spirit applies.

**Bruce:** Same thing. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Father, wife, children. He works through the same chain of command He had at creation.

Now I've given you how it was before the Fall. Now my premise is this. The real problem in marriage is dealing with sin, not position, and cultural activities and understanding. It's not liberation versus chauvinism. The real problem is sin, dealing with sin.

Now let me show you what happened after the Fall. We saw what happened before the Fall. Adam named her the feminine part of his own name, *Ish* and *Ishah*. Okay, is everybody with me? Now let's take a look at what happened after the Fall, and the entrance of sin.

So back to the book of Genesis. Go to 3:16. God brings tension into the man/woman relationship after the Fall. You'll see that in 3:16.

Now the word *desire* there is a very interesting word. Look at 3:16 of Genesis. It means “to urge, to drive on, to impel or to control.” It's used three times in the Old Testament. Once, in Genesis 4:7, it is used. (*Paraphrase.*) “Sin desires to have your control.” In other words, it desires to take over and control you. Sin desires to control you. Genesis 4:7.

Now notice that. The direct opposition to her desire to control is, “he will rule over you.” Now after the Fall, her desire is to take control. And what does God do? He gives her the very thing that's the opposite of what she wants to do, because of sin, and that is to “rule over you.” He gives her somebody to rule over her because her desire is to take over. Do you see that? Her desire now, because of sin, is to take over and control. And He says in effect, “Okay. If that's going to happen, I'm going to give you the exact opposite of what you want. I'm going to give you somebody to rule over you.”

**Participant:** Mm-hmm.

**Bruce:** Now that's the perspective from the woman. Now because of the Fall, the consequences for mankind are the beginning of women's lib and the beginning of male chauvinism. That's when male chauvinism and women's liberation began, right after the Fall.

Woman wants to control, man wants to dictate. And so what does He say to the man? Look at verse 7. “Live with your wives in an understanding way.” It gives you exactly the opposite of the thing that you want to do. Because of sin, you want to control. You want to be a dictator. You want to be a male chauvinist. And what does He say? No! Do the opposite! Live with your wife in an understanding way.

And to the woman, He says, in effect, “You want to control because of sin. You want to take over. No. I'm going to give you somebody to rule over you.” You see how that works?

Sin is the issue! Women's liberation is a sinful activity, because it teaches women to want to take over, just as male chauvinism is a sinful activity, because it teaches men to dictate. We're dictators! We're despots!

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Scripture says, “Live with your wives in an understanding way.” Peter is going to go into that in detail in a couple of weeks.

So we need to understand that God gives us the very thing that we don’t want to do! The woman does not want to submit. He says that He’s going to give somebody “to rule over you.” The man does not want to lead like a servant. He wants to dictate. So He says, (*Paraphrase*), “No. Live with your wife in an understanding way.” It’s exactly the opposite, because what is God doing through His grace? He’s dealing with sin, as a result of the Fall.

Now sin does not change the roles or functions. It just pollutes them. Sin does not change the roles or the responsibilities or the functions; it just corrupts them. Headship and helper were established prior to sin, not after sin. Genesis 2 comes before Genesis 3.

As a result of sin, woman has a desire to control, and to resist man’s positional authority. And man has a corrupted desire for complete, unchallenged authority and dictatorship. Those are the results of sin. Yes?

**Participant:** Boy, if that doesn’t sum up marriage today in the United States!

**Bruce:** Absolutely, it does! That’s why I’m saying this, brothers. You’ve got to understand that, when we lose our distinctiveness in the world, we’re no longer Christian! Now what I’ve just described is American marriages. Yes?

**Participant:** I had dinner with my son, who is twenty years old. We’re going through a separation right now, my wife and I. And he actually said, “I don’t see any distinction between Christians and the world.” He said that, if anything, Christian marriages are worse. That’s his opinion.

**Bruce:** Right.

**Participant:** And I said, “I think it’s because of selfishness, which is sin.”

**Bruce:** Right.

**Participant:** Same thing.

**Bruce:** Right. Men, this is what I’m trying to say. This is really serious for us, to consider what we’re doing, and understanding that when we lose our distinctiveness,-- and it starts right in the family—when we lose our distinctiveness, we’re no longer Christian as a movement. We’re just something other than that. It’s some cultural activity. And so we need to take this seriously.

That’s why our fights and quarrels start. Why do fights and quarrels start? Because she wants to control, and I won’t let her, because I don’t want to be a servant. I want to be a dictator. I’m the authority. You see, that’s what causes the fights and the quarrels.

You know, one of the things that I do in my marriage counseling is that I teach young couples the difference between an argument and a quarrel. An argument is nothing more than the presentation of facts. Take the example of a court. The defense attorney presents facts. That’s his argument. The prosecuting attorney presents facts. That’s his argument. So I try to teach families how to argue. Just present facts. But don’t let it turn into a quarrel! When it turns into a quarrel, sin enters in, and it becomes a fight!

That’s what James is saying. Where do these fights come from? Don’t they come from your desires, from your desires for happiness and pleasure, these desires? That’s where they come from. We need to go back and understand how to deal with these

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things, and we have to understand not only the creation ordinance, but what happened as a result of the Fall.

Let me tell you this, because I’m wrapping up here. This is all introduction to the next couple of weeks. (*Laughter.*)

Go to Ephesians chapter five, please. Yes, Don?

**Don:** Bruce, I find it interesting that Adam did not give the name Eve to his wife till after the Fall. Before, their intimacy was such that it was really like Adam and Mrs. Adam.

**Bruce:** Absolutely.

**Don:** Man and woman, interestingly enough.

**Bruce:** Good point, Don. Thank you. Go to the book of Ephesians. Go to chapter five, please. Now let’s pick it up at verse 22.

Let me make this statement as an introduction. Then, hopefully, I’ll unpack this for us over the next couple of weeks. Now we’ve got three bishops in the room, and they can correct me if I’m wrong. We’ve got Bishop Rodgers, we’ve got Bishop Don, and bishop Carl. (*Laughter.*)

**Participant:** Bishop Jared.

**Bruce:** But listen to this. If you and I do not understand Christ’s relationship to the church, we will never understand our role as a husband or wife. If you do not understand Christ’s role in the church, and His relationship to the church, His body, then you and I will never, ever understand the role or responsibility of a husband or wife.

Listen to this description. It’s always about Christ and His relationship to the church. That’s the picture of the family. If you don’t understand this, you’ll never understand what it means to be a loving, leading husband.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.” What’s her model? Her model is Christ’s relationship to the church. That’s her model, not you!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Not American versions. Not political correctness. Not women’s liberation. It’s Christ’s relationship to the church. If she doesn’t understand that, she’s never going to understand what it means to be a godly wife.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her.”

Men, if you don’t understand Christ’s relationship to the church, and what that means, you’ll never be a loving husband.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** That’s our model. It’s not books. It’s not motivational speaking. It’s understanding Christ’s relationship to His church, and the degree to which you and I understand that principle itself, that doctrine itself, will determine what loving husbands we are going to be. So that’s our model, not some psychological, psychiatric version of what a relationship is. It’s not the ten steps of having the closest relationship with your

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wife. It’s understanding Christ’s relationship to his church. When you understand that, you’ll understand your role as a husband.

“That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

What is my role as a husband? It’s to present her to be holy, without blemish. That’s my role. How do I do that? I can’t do that by being a dictator! I do that by being a head, by being a leader, by being a servant. Peter is going to tell us how to do that. But you see, if I don’t understand Christ’s relationship to His church, I will have no understanding of what it means to be a loving husband.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** And vice versa. If a woman doesn’t understand Christ’s relationship to the church, she has no idea of what it means to be a submissive wife, because Christ’s relationship to the church is the model for the husband and the wife.

“In the same way, husbands should love their wives, as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.”

Christ is taking care of His body!

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** That’s why I prayed for them this morning. We need to do that. Christ is taking care of His body.

Now notice this. Who does the sanctifying of the church? Who sanctifies the church?

**Men:** Christ.

**Bruce:** Christ does. And if you are in Christ today, you will be sanctified! You will be, because Christ is doing that *to* you! He’s doing that to His body. He is the Sanctifier.

He does it through two ways—through our obedience, and through His chastenings. But you will be sanctified. You will be presented in the heavenly court without spot and without blemish, because Christ is going to sanctify you, if you are in Christ today.

That is our model. That is how you and I need to think of our wives and our families. Now we don’t do the sanctifying, of course not. We understand how to do that, because we understand that Christ is sanctifying us!

**Participant:** Mm-hmm.

**Bruce:** That’s what He’s doing to me. I need to take that and give that away to her. What is that called, giving away to somebody else what God has given you?

**Participant:** Ministry.

**Bruce:** Ministry! That’s how you minister to your wife! If you don’t understand how Christ relates to His church, you’ll never understand how you can relate to your wife.

Men, this is serious stuff. And the moment we lose the picture of this, we’re just like the world. We’re no longer Christian. We’re just some cultural movement known as Americanism.

**Participant:** Bruce, I’ve never looked at it this greatly, but if you take that same view of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and husband, wife, child as that same image, when we break that up, we’re distorting the image of God, which is literally blasphemous.

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**Bruce:** We’re just distorting the image of God, and His relationship to the church.

**Participant:** Yes, we are.

**Bruce:** That’s why the church is so weak, because we don’t give a good image of it. Yes, sir?

**Participant:** I love Alistair Begg’s statement on this. “Children in the home should see the gospel being lived, in the way that the husband loves his wife, as Christ loved the church, and in the way the wife submits to her husband.”

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Participant:** Even as the church submits to Christ.

**Bruce:** Amen. Let’s go back. Remember, this is all introduction, as we begin the next couple of weeks. Now go back to 1 Peter chapter three.

Look at verse 7, because here is where we’re going to spend our time. What does this mean? Remember this. Doctrine precedes application. What have I given you this morning?

**Men:** Doctrine.

**Bruce:** Doctrine. Of what? The family. That’s what you’ve got to understand. The real issue is, how do I apply that? How do I put that into practice?

Now here is what Peter is going to tell us, and we’re going to look at this in depth in the next couple of weeks. “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way.”

What does that mean? We’re going to explore that. Now we’re talking about the practice of understanding my doctrine. Equal personhood, distinctive roles. How do I do that in an understanding way?

“Showing honor to the woman.” What does it mean to show honor to my wife? How do I do that? Peter is going to tell us. Scripture tells us how to do that.

“As the weaker vessel.” What does that mean? What does it mean, that she is a weaker vessel? My wife can do a lot of things better than I can do. But that is not describing her strengths. I need to understand Biblically what that means, as part of the creation ordinance.

“Since they are heirs with you of the grace of life.” Heirs with me! It’s not me versus her, her versus me. It’s an us thing. It’s *ish* and *ishah*.

**Participant:** Mm-hmm.

**Bruce:** That’s what marriage is.

“So that your prayers may not be hindered.” Sometimes I wonder why my prayers are hindered, not because I don’t say the right words, but because I may not be treating my wife correctly. There’s a correlation there, men. And you and I need to be serious about this. We’ll take this under advisement and consideration in the next couple of weeks.

But remember this. If you and I don’t understand Christ’s relationship to the church, you and I will never, ever understand our relationships as husbands, and our responsibilities. May God give us the grace to open our eyes, that we might behold Him more clearly, for Christ’s sake.

Let’s pray. Lord, we’re entering into foreign territory in America. This is not stuff that we normally hear, but it’s something that You ordain in Your sovereign rule of the

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universe, that You created a relationship between men and women that is to be a reflection of Your Son’s relationship to His church. Father, help us never to become complacent in our understanding of our church involvement. We are involved in something that is designed to change the history of this world and transform society, for Your glory. Father, may it begin with us. Break down our barriers, our ego, our sinfulness. Replace it with Your grace, so that You above all may receive the glory, for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.” (*Applause.*)