

## **“A New Walk” Part 9**

### **The Family of God**

Ephesians 5:21-33

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**Jeff:** Our heavenly Father, we rejoice in knowing that You are God, and that You’ve revealed Yourself in such a wonderful way as Creator and Lord. But as a result of the Fall You have also revealed Yourself to us as Redeemer. And certainly in Christ Jesus and our union with Him You’ve revealed Yourself to us as Father and certainly Friend. And as we gather in Your midst we recognize that You are indeed all that You’ve said You are, all that You’ve revealed Yourself to be. You are holy and wise and good, and many other things. And yet these remind us, Lord, that we should always bear with every providence good or bad, at least from our perspective or estimation, with long-suffering and in waiting dependence upon You. For we know that whatever we experience we experience certainly for good. And out of Your wisdom that circumstance grows. So Father, we pray that You’ll teach us to bear with our difficult providences and to rejoice in good ones. And we pray,

Father, that our dependence upon You in all providences would be shown.

We ask, Lord, that You’ll remind us continually of the Lord Jesus Christ. Set Him before our eyes and place Him in our minds so that He’s never far away in our thinking, that we might always remember the greatness of grace that We’ve received in Him. Father, remind us of how it is by faith alone and not works that we are saved. Teach us, Father, to continually rely upon Your Holy Spirit as we pray, as we give thanks, and as we live our day-to-day lives.

Father, we certainly come before You asking on behalf of Bruce. We ask that His transition will be a peaceful one and will be one of ease. We pray, Father, that Becky will receive the needed help. And we pray, Father, for Bruce’s well-being, for his recovery. And yet, Lord, we pause to thank You for the many things that You’ve accomplished in his life, for the way in which You used him and used him greatly, mightily. We pray, Father, that You will continue to make him useful in different ways, ways that are different at least in terms of their focus from an outward perspective. So Father, we pray perhaps that rather than making him mighty in teaching that You would make him mighty in prayer. We pray, Father, that his wisdom will still abound. We pray, Father, for many things on his behalf. But we pray also for endurance for Becky. And Lord, we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. So let me ask that you turn to Ephesians chapter 5. And today we’ll start in verse 21, and we’ll go through the end of the chapter. So let me read to you this morning. I realize that I’m starting in the middle of a sentence, but that’s okay.

*“Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 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, His body, and is 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, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with*

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*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.*

*“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, because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’*

*“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”*

**Ted Wood:** This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God!

**Jeff:** Thank you. All right. Before we start I want to just make a quick pact with you. Anything we say stays in this room. Never share this tape with your wife. Just kidding. *(Laughter)* All right.

You know, I thought about how to begin this segment. And there are a number of things that I thought about. But perhaps the one that comes to mind and that I think is perhaps most illustrative of what it is that we’re going to be trying to talk about during this segment is this illustration.

You’ve been in the movie theater before. And you’re sitting there and the camera light is behind you, and nothing is on the screen except the light, and nothing is on the screen except the light, and nothing is on the screen except the light. *(Laughter)*

**Don Maurer:** I can identify wholeheartedly. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** And you realize that something’s wrong. And they announce that something’s wrong. And so, you know, you start the animal shadows. You pull up your hand and you’ve got the dog barking and the bunny, and all that sort of thing.

And let’s say that you get up. And let’s say that you get closer to the screen. And as you get closer to the screen they get smaller—that sort of thing, right? Farther away they’re large.

Let’s say you put your hand up. And let’s say that you go all the way back, as far back as you can. And now your hand doesn’t even look like a hand. It’s monstrous—it’s big; the hand is bulging. But as you walk closer to the screen you can tell that it’s a hand. And as you get all the way up to the screen it looks like a hand. And in fact, if you place it on top of the screen, it mirrors your hand. Now the shadow is not your hand, and your hand is not the shadow. There is an image of your hand on the screen.

Now when you think about that illustration I think that helps us to think about what marriage ought to be like. Marriage ought not to be Christ and His bride, but mirror it. The farther away we get from that picture the more monstrous and deformed it looks. The closer we get to that model the more we look like Christ and His church; we mirror it. The farther away we are the more distorted; the closer we are the more beautiful, right? I think that describes the picture.

Now we have to ask ourselves. Well, what about the biblical teaching? What was it in the beginning and what is it now, and what are we trying to get back to?

Well, if you were to open up to the book of Genesis chapter 3, you know the story. The story is that the woman blew it. *(Laughter)* The truth of the matter is that the man blew it.

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**Ted:** Right.

**Jeff:** And the truth of the matter is, the man blew it because he was the head of his house. And he should have led his wife in love. And instead he allowed his wife to usurp his headship. And she takes the lead and makes the decision. And so he being the head, the responsibility falls on him. And the human race falls into sin as a result of Adam’s sin. And yet it was Eve who took the first bite. But because he is her head he is responsible.

Now when you look at the curse, the curse is interesting; it bears this out. In Genesis chapter 3 we read about that curse, and it says this. In verse 15 we read about the first gospel which is glorious. But in 16 this is what we read.

*“To the woman He said( (and then he talks about putting enmity between her and the snake in the previous one, and then child-bearing.) But then this; it’s in the second part of verse 16.*

*“Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,  
But he shall rule over you.”*

Now look at the next part, verse 17.

*“And to Adam He said: ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife.’”* Now that plays into that. *“Your desire will be contrary to your husband, and he will rule over you.”*

You know, the NIV used to render it this way. *“And your desire will be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”* And when I first read that, being a very, very young Christian, I thought *how romantic!* (*Laughter*) I did not realize that her desire will be for her husband’s place as head. And as she desires to usurp he will dominate in an ungodly way. He will rule over her. He will suppress her in unrighteousness.

And that’s the eternal battle going on between husbands and wives. Wives are seeking the husband’s position and husbands are seeking to dominate.

Now you say to me, “I don’t see many husbands seeking to dominate. I see a lot of husbands letting go of the reins.” Well that’s part of it, right? The wife at this time in history has basically won. And so she’s seeking to usurp and the husband goes along with it. Well, that’s just a manifestation of the curse in a different way. Rather than seeking to dominate her he just allows her to rule. But it’s all the same; it’s all the same.

Now when you get to Ephesians, Ephesians comes along and Ephesians actually teaches the reversal of the curse. It says that if you are in Christ then *“Wives, submit to your husbands.”* You see how that’s a different manifestation. And it is actually one that mirrors the Garden. The wife is to submit to her husband. And the husband is to love his wife.

Now notice this. It doesn’t say that he is to lead his wife. It doesn’t say that he is to be dominant over his wife. It says that he is to love her. And yet the loving leadership is real leadership. And the wife’s submission and respect is real submission and respect. Yes?

**Brave Man:** I heard somebody explain one time that the word—

**Sig Tragard:** Hold on, Paul. We’ve got to get you on the recording. It’s too important.

**Jeff:** It’s too important. (*Laughter*)

**Paul:** I’m on the spot. I heard somebody explain it one time and I thought it was enlightening. It might have been Bruce. When they mean *submissive*, in that case it like when a soldier would be submissive to a general. So let’s say that you as the leader of the household is essentially like a general. And your wife would be submissive to you as a

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good soldier. But the general still has to put his life on the line and basically put everything out there. And you know, it might be helpful to explain it that way. She loves you and is going to try to support you as much as she can to basically make it happen.

**Jeff:** And it figures that Bruce would have given that military illustration. *(Laughter)* And I don't have any quibble with that at all. Let me put it like this. Let's take a real example. Let's say that there's a job opportunity to move, okay? And let's say that the husband says to his wife, "Look." He comes home; he brings home the offer. He says, "Look at what we've been offered." And he says to his wife, "What do you think about this?"

And she says, "Well, I really think it's a good idea. I think that we ought to take it. What do you think?"

"Well, I think it's really good for the family; I think we ought to go." You see, that's the way it ought to be. That's how a loving and a submitting relationship ought to look in its best form. Why? Because the husband is coming home. He wants to lead his family. He comes home but he asks his wife. "What do you think about this?", because they are one flesh. And they are partners in this; there's a real *koinonia* in this relationship, right? They're partners in this. And she feels free to offer what she thinks.

Now let's say you have something like this. Let's say that you had something like I had in my own family, okay? I said to my wife, "If the dishes look anything like this, you just became the most unalive person in the world." *(Laughter)*

Let's say that you come home. I had been in a denominational search for a long time. And I had been an independent congregational pastor.

**Ted:** Ugh! *(Laughter)* Sorry.

**Jeff:** That's okay.

**Ted:** It's a natural reaction.

**Jeff:** That's right; a natural reaction, and mine too now. But anyway,--

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** No pretensions on that. Anyway, whatever; I digress. You're right, Bishop; this is a bad idea. *(Laughter)* So I became convinced of Presbyterianism. But I didn't know which Presbyterian church I was going to belong to. Anyway I focused on the Reformed Presbyterian Church. And then I decided that it was time. I'd been talking to my wife and she hadn't been exposed to any of these Presbyterian denominations. And I decided that I was going to take my wife. I was going to take her to worship one Sunday. So I took off from my church and we went to worship.

Now I did not think about this. You see, what I did was that I took in the closest one. *(Laughter)* Ah, right! And the closest one happened to be the most conservative one in terms of not only theology but attire. And there were a lot of head coverings in that congregation.

And we walked out of that church and my wife said to me, "Bye!" *(Laughter)* "You can join it, but I'm not joining that church."

And so we talked about it. And at that time we couldn't come to an agreement. And so we joined. *(Laughter)* Because headship is real.

Now if you were to ask my wife today, if you were to say to her today, if you were to talk to her about the church, and so on, she loves the RP Church. And she just absolutely

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wants to be a part of it and can't think of not being a part of it; she just absolutely loves it. But back then it was a no-go in her mind.

But the point is that I had to lead. And here I was. I had been working through the denominational issues and I had to think and do it. And I thought to myself that one experience is not enough to trump this.

Now I know it's been her experience, and that's basically the only experience she had. But headship means something and I've got to lead, so I did. That was one of the very few decisions in our life together of thirty years where I said, “Well, we're going in this direction. We can't agree, but we're moving in this direction anyway. I wish you were in agreement.” And I'm happy that the Lord has brought her into agreement, and so on.

Now I'll give you another instance. Fourteen years ago when I came down here, the church that was going to plant the church that I pastor now asked me if I'd come down. I thought they were going to talk to me about another seminary student. They ended up talking to me about me and they said, “Would you come down and plant this?”

I went home and I said to my wife, “I just talked to some guys from a church out in Pittsburgh.”

She said, “What did they want?”

I said, “They wanted to know about church planting.”

She said, “Did they want to know about the student that's in our church?”

I said, “No. They wanted to know if we would plant it.”

And she said, “Did you tell them no?” *(Laughter)*

And I said, “I told them that I would think about it. And they gave me two weeks.”

And she said, “Then you can tell them no.” *(Laughter)*

And I said, “I'll tell you what. I want us to pray about this for two weeks. We'll not talk about it; I just want us to pray about it for two weeks.”

In a week's time my wife came to me and said, “When are we leaving?” *(Laughter)* And so now do you know what I do to her? Any time there's a decision that's coming up I'll say, “We're going to set aside two weeks and pray.” *(Laughter)*

Anyway, you get the point. The point is that headship is real. And yet it's not a trump card that you pull out. In a healthy relationship you try to figure out what you're going to do together. And you try to come to some consensus on it. And if you can't, if you absolutely can't, then the man has to make the decision.

Now my wife says this; here's what my wife says. I absolutely love this whole Ephesians 5 thing because she said, “If you ever have to pull the trump card and you make the decision, you have to bear the responsibility.”

And do you know what I always tell her? I always tell her that I have to bear the responsibility. But you can't rub it in my face. *(Laughter)* Yes?

**Don:** You said something about pulling out the trump card? If you're not pulling out the Trump card, does that mean that your wife has to be a-Biden with your decision? *(Laughter and groans)*

**Jeff:** You know what? This recorder just went haywire. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** Jeff, hold on.

**Jeff:** Wait a minute; I want to ask. Is that all you do when I'm talking? Is that all you do?

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**Sig:** I told him that I had to run the full length of the room. Jim Hamilton has a brilliant question.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Jim Hamilton:** I don’t know if we really want to go here, but it makes you wonder what Adam should have done after she sins.

**Bishop Rodgers:** He should have stopped her.

**Jeff:** Yes, he should have stopped her from the beginning. But there are a number of things that you can think about. He should have stopped her from the beginning. He should have slapped the fruit out of her hand if he was with her. He should have hacked the snake to pieces, right? Can we stop the recorder?

**Sig:** No.

**Jeff:** Had she eaten the fruit he could have even killed her.

**Brave Man:** Yeah; wow!

**Jeff:** He was the protector of the garden, right? I mean, let’s face it. He was the head and the guardian of the garden. And he could have lived in hope that God could even resurrect his wife on the basis of his adherence to the covenant.

**Brave Man:** Or created a younger wife. *(Laughter)*

**Bishop Rodgers:** Stop that! *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** No, no, no!

**Bishop:** We don’t want any more questions.

**Jeff:** You have the microphone right up to your mouth.

**Sig:** What about Adam keeping the serpent out of the garden?

**Jeff:** Well, did he know it came in? That’s the thing. But if he knew it was there he should have hacked the snake to pieces, right?

**Sig:** So the problem is compounded once Adam takes a bite of the apple.

**Bishop:** Not only does he not consent to it; he joins in it.

**Jeff:** Think about that in the Old Testament. Remember how the wife can take a vow? And she comes home and she says, “Honey, I just took a vow!”

And the husband says, “Whoa!” And he says, “You took a vow, but we’re going to cancel that one.” And he is allowed to cancel the vow she makes.

And so say that she eats the fruit. You know, there’s a sense in which he could have went and taken her to God and said, “She ate.”

**Jim:** “What are we going to do?”

**Jeff:** “What are we going to do with this?” Something like that.

**Bishop:** All of this is derivative of the fact that when God made Eve He made her as a help meet to Adam.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** And the whole feminist movement in the church tries to say that submission only arises after the Fall.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** Actually submission is already in creation. It’s distorted in the Fall and redeemed in Christ.

**Jeff:** That’s right. And that’s why I said that to you. And the bishop is right. That manifestation is in any denomination that tries to bring feminism into it. It tries to say that all of this stuff—submission and headship and all of that—is post-Fall; it’s a result of

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the Fall. But if you read what the Scriptures say, God says, “*Because you listened to the voice of your wife.*”

**Bishop:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And if you read Eve’s curse it clearly says that her desire will be for her husband’s place and that he will rule over her.

**Bishop:** The English language has always said “man,” including women with the men, which is assuming Biblical language.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s right.

**Bishop:** And we caved.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s right. It’s amazing. I think feminism has crept into the church across the board, no matter the denomination. It’s just here.

**Bishop:** Yes.

**Sig:** So the original language is more man than mankind when it refers to male and female?

**Bishop:** It means mankind.

**Jeff:** Okay, so that’s by way of introduction. I thought that after maybe talking to you a little bit about the general scope of things that we would work through the text. And that would be a little better of an approach. So why don’t we just walk through the text a little bit and see some of the teaching that’s here?

So verse 22: *Wives, be subject to husbands.* Now what I want you to notice is that this whole idea of submission happens in a particular realm or sphere. What is the sphere in which this submission takes place? It takes place in that prepositional phrase “*in the Lord.*”

Now immediately you’re going to realize something that is intuitive, right? And it’s not only intuitive; it’s taught in the text. But my wife is not to be submissive to another man, okay? My wife is to be submissive to me. And your wife is to be submissive to you. My daughter is to be submissive to me. She is not to be submissive to another man. So there’s an order in terms of headship and submission.

And we know this. For instance, with our daughters we know there used to be the practice of men coming to us as dads and asking for our daughter’s hand in marriage. And at the wedding we give our daughters away, and so on. And what is all of this indicative of? All of this is indicative of the fact that we are the heads of our homes, and that we then transfer our daughters from our headship to the headship of another man.

Now here is the point. There are a number of points that I need to make. But the first is this. We need to remember that our headship over our wives and their submission to us is in the Lord.

Now let me say a word about that which I think is common-sensical and maybe too obvious even to say. But let me just be candid with you. If we ask our wives to do something that is sinful, then we have asked them to submit to us and our whims or desires and not in the Lord. And she is perfectly free at that moment to refuse; it’s perfectly legitimate.

I mean, an obvious one would be if you asked your wife to use pornography to stimulate your sex life. That is obviously wrong. And she is free to say, “We’re not bringing pornography into our marriage, and I’m not doing that.” And she is perfectly legitimate to say that.

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Now that’s an easy one, okay? That’s an easy one. The more difficult one—and this is always more difficult—it’s always difficult to try and get someone to identify the fact that when they’re marrying a man that they’re all googly-eyed about, right? And this is why it’s so hard for a dad to transfer that daughter, right? There’s got to be a little trust because if you have this idea of headship, then that wife has to be submissive to that husband in the Lord. But who wants to put her in a situation where she’s going to be forced into a situation where she’s constantly having to refuse a husband’s ungodly request? So you have to be careful about who you transfer your daughter’s headship to.

Now let me give you a for instance on how difficult that is. It’s really a wisdom issue, right? If it’s a sin issue then it’s clear. He’s able and he should say, “No, I’m not doing that.”

But really, if you’re marrying in the Lord, it’s a wisdom issue. And the question I always ask girls when they’re getting ready to marry men is that I always say, “Are you willing to follow him even into an unwise decision?”

Because let’s say that you can’t come to a consensus. But you think the decision is fundamentally unwise—not sinful; fundamentally unwise. Are you willing to follow him into what you deem to be an unwise decision?

Let’s say he comes home and he says, “Honey, look. I’ve got a sure thing in the market. We’re going to take all of our money and we’re going to invest it here.”

And she says, “That’s crazy! We can’t do that. That would be sin.”

And he says, “How so?”

And she says, “You’re not caring for the family.”

And he says, “Okay. We’ll take an x amount of percentage and we’ll set that aside. We’re going to take the rest of it and we’re going to invest it.”

And she still says, “I think that’s unwise.” And he says, “Look, I think that’s a sure thing. I think that if we invest in the market we’ll be able to retire when we’re fifty. We’ll be able to do it; it will be great.” And she says, “I think that’s unwise.”

And he says, “Look, I think it’s wise.” Are you willing to follow him into that unwise decision?

I used to work with guys in the glass factory who had been transferred to other parts of the country to work in glass factories elsewhere. And their wives said, “We’ll be here when you retire,” and would not follow them and did not follow them. Their families were here, their children were here, and especially the grandkids were here. If the grandkids were in that area and that guy got transferred, the wife would refuse to go. I can tell you of three wives in that instance, in one factory, that refused to follow their husbands to where their husbands were going, and not because the husband wanted to go. It was because the husband realized at his age, if he was going to retain the job making the money he was making, that he had to go. And so the wife said, “No, I’m not following you.”

Those are the kinds of things. She may not think that’s wise. “What are we going to do? Those grandkids aren’t going to know us. We don’t know how to use Skype.” You know, that sort of thing, right? “I’m not going.”

But he’s going, “But I have to go. You have to come with me.” And she’s going, “I’m not going.”

**Ted:** He doesn’t have to go.



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**Jeff:** He doesn't have to go.

**Ted:** No, he doesn't have to go.

**Brave Man:** What's the question?

**Ted:** He said that he has to go. No. I really appreciate you coming at this; you're doing an excellent job. Not that my opinion matters. But—

**Jeff:** It does; go ahead.

**Ted:** I find that for the most part that men are more emotionally immature than women are. It's interesting; I've worked for several campaigns for homeless shelters for missions. And it is much harder to follow men in their recovery than it is women, because women are attached to their children, and they're unattached. And I don't know. There are a lot of men who make decisions and insist that this is the way the family should go that have made very immature and destructive decisions, even though they are not sinful. I think my wife is very cautious. And I think almost invariably that her cautions have been proven right overall. And it's been wise for me to listen to her cautions, although it drives me nuts at the time.

For instance I think of an instance where I would press her that if I think this ministry can be done she's just uncomfortable doing it because it stretches her beyond her comfort zone. I will press her on that, to do that ministry. You know what I mean?

Here's the problem. The problem is that now women can do as they please.

**Jeff:** Yes, sure.

**Ted:** They really can. And they have positions of power and authority in the workplace. And it was much easier when they didn't. My dad went to the Rigley Building in downtown Chicago. He worked with rails and metals and came home at night, and my mom was there fixing everything. And it's not the same story.

**Jeff:** No.

**Ted:** Men and women work; I mean, couples work. And I heard the statistics the other day; it was astounding. It's another world for me.

**Bishop:** As you're considering a call, part of the consideration to see whether this is God's leading or not has to do with how this would impact your wife.

**Jeff:** Yes; that's right.

**Bishop:** And if you make the call and just go home and tell her “We're going,” then that's not the best approach. And indeed it might be detrimental to her well-being. You might hear the Lord say, “No; that's not your call.”

**Ted:** You're right. Everything you're saying is right in general. I'm not objecting. It's just that I think that it's very nuanced without compromising what the Scripture says.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** We've lost the game. We've given it up in the Episcopal or Anglican world. We've simply succumbed.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** And I had to write a really lengthy report on this. And I remembered that as I was typing the notes on this that the hair was standing on the back of my head, knowing that I'm really going to catch it when this thing comes out.

**Jeff:** Well, I mean, this has probably been two or three years ago now with our denomination. It started in our presbytery. A 70-page paper came to us wanting us to

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ordain women to the eldership. And it came to us from a retired moderator in our denomination. So it was somebody that had some standing.

And so what happened was that we ended up counseling him. Otherwise we refused the paper. And our presbytery ended up disciplining him and it was unanimously sustained. He was suspended from the ministry. That went to our highest court; it went to our synod because he appealed. And the appeal was rejected and our position was upheld.

Now through all that that was ugly, because obviously if you have someone able to bring a paper like that forward, there is and there has been an encroaching feminism. But I couldn't believe it. It was really quite a happy providence for us, but one that has taken its toll.

**Jim:** This says, “*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” So you have “*in the Lord.*” I assume that you're talking about Jesus Christ.

**Jeff:** Yes. If you go further into that, I think you were in verse 21, right?

**Jim:** Right.

**Jeff:** “*Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord,*” or “*in the Lord.*”

**Jim:** Where are you reading that?

**Jeff:** 22. Jim,. Were you going to say something about that?

**Jim:** Well, I'm not sure exactly what that means in terms of how you're working out differences with our wife.

**Jeff:** Say that again.

**Jim:** How do you work out differences with our wife?

**Jeff:** Oh, yeah. Well, okay. There are places in the New Testament where this is worked out. So for instance, if you go to 1 Peter 3:1-7, it's an interesting passage, right?

**Transcriber's Note:** 1 Peter 3:1-7: NKJV. “*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.*”

“*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*”

**Jeff:** It's that passage where the wife is told to try to win her husband without a word. And that's an interesting text for a number of reasons. But it says, “*Wives, likewise be subject to your own husbands. But when they see your respectful and pure conduct, do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of the gold jewelry and 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 precious,*” and so on.

**Transcriber's Note:** ESV.

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**Jeff:** I always remind my wife of this next portion. “*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.*” (Pause; laughter) I always tell her, “You call me lord.” (Laughter)

So let me talk to you a little bit about that. The interesting thing is this. Who has another translation which would have rendered verse 2, “*pure conduct*”, as “*chaste conduct?*” Does anybody have that—chaste conduct?

**Bishop:** What’s the verse?

**Jeff:** 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 2.

**Sig:** We could look it up on Bible Gateway.

**Brave Man:** “*With purity and reverence of your lives.*”

**Jeff:** Yeah. Purity.

**Brave Man:** And reverence.

**Jeff:** The idea is “*chaste.*” And some translations, I think the older translations, say “*see your chaste behavior.*” Now what does that mean? If somebody is chaste, what does that mean?

**Jim:** Moral.

**Jeff:** Huh?

**Brave Man:** Moral.

**Jeff:** Yes, moral. But more specifically it’s somebody who isn’t sleeping around, right? That’s what is essentially here.

Now the question is this. Here’s the question, and you may not have thought about it like this. If this woman is a believer, why in the world would Peter say, “let your husband see your chaste behavior, and so be won?” No idea, right? Don’t say anything to them; win them without a word. Win them with your chaste behavior and your reverence.

Now I’ll tell you. And here is why the adornments of braided hair and all that sort of thing factor into this. Now when you look at some of the early texts, some of the first-century domestic philosophical texts, how to be husband and wife, written by the Roman and Greek philosophers, one of the things that you realize is that there is a lot of overlap between what they say and what Peter is saying here.

For instance, there is in those texts the idea of male headship. And we oftentimes think (because we’re told to think this), that those kinds of societies were Neanderthal in their views of women and so treated them poorly. That’s not what those texts say. Those texts talk about how a man is to love and appreciate his wife and be kind to her, and entrust her with the management of the house, the children and the slaves and the servants, and all that sort of thing. In those domestic philosophies there is a view of male headship that is always caricatured today in its worst form.

**Bishop:** Yes.

**Jeff:** So there’s a lot of overlap between what Peter and Paul are saying about headship and what Roman and Greek philosophy say about male headship. Now here’s the thing that they don’t say. Here is the thing that Peter and Paul don’t say—a couple of things.

First of all, one of the things that they don’t say—and thankfully so—is that these Greek and roman philosophers say look. If you want to keep your wife faithful to you,

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don't let her go out all dressed up. *(Laughter)* don't let her go out all dressed up. If she goes out all dressed up she's going to find trouble. That's what they say.

And they'll say, “Keep the jewelry from her,” and all that sort of thing, when she goes out. That's the first thing that they say.

Now you say to me, “That's what Peter says here. Keep the jewelry away from her.” Okay, there's a second thing that the domestic philosophers of that day say that Peter and Paul do not say, and it's this. They, those domestic philosophers, say that a wife is only to have the friends of her husband. Her friend circle has to be her husband's friend circle.

And then they add this. Her husband's gods are his friends. And therefore his gods must be her gods.

And you see, this is what Peter is saying. Peter is saying that's wrong. His gods can't be your gods, not if Jesus Christ is your Savior.

And so what he's saying is this. Here's what I think he's saying. What I think he is saying is, be respectful to your husband in every possible way. But you must be faithful to Jesus Christ. And if that means being unfaithful to your husband in having a friend that is not his, then you must have this friend.

And then I think this is why he adds that stuff about bracelets and jewelry and all that sort of thing. I think he adds it because I think what he's saying is that when you come to worship, leave all of that stuff at home. Don't give him reason to think otherwise. Let him believe that you're chaste. Don't let him see you going out all dolled up so he believes that you're going out looking for trouble. Don't go out dressed up like that. Show him your chaste behavior and let him see your purity, and in that way win him without a word..

And then Peter goes on in that same text and he says, “And when they ask you—when these difficult people in your life ask you—then give them an answer,” right? And so what Peter is doing is setting this woman up so that she can be asked by her husband, “Why are you doing this? Why do you go out without dolling yourself up? Why don't you have my friends? You seem so respectful in every way possible otherwise,” that sort of thing. So that's what's happening there, right?

And that plays into this, in the Lord. In the Lord she is to be respectful of her husband in every way possible, except in ways that he would ask her to be disrespectful to the Lord. Then she must respect the Lord and not her husband. Yes?

**Tom Hansz:** One thing in verse 33, though. It says that the man is to love his wife.

**Jeff:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** But the wife must respect her husband. When is she to love her husband?

**Jeff:** Well, Titus says that older women are to teach younger women how to love their husbands and their children. So it's not absent from the church's idea.

**Tom:** It doesn't say that here.

**Jeff:** Yes, but it doesn't say everything it could here either. You know what I mean?

**Tom:** I know.

**Jeff:** Right. It's sort of like somebody saying about the Westminster Confession or Shorter Catechism. Why isn't love included in the description of God? Well, it's included elsewhere in the Catechism; it's just not included in there. It doesn't say every attribute that could be included. So you can't criticize it for that.

**Tom:** And that would be the prime aspect?

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**Jeff:** Respect?

**Tom:** The prime aspect?

**Jeff:** Look, I want to tell you something. If you ask a man if he wants his wife to love him or respect him, my guess is that most men would say, “I want my wife to respect me.”

**Ted:** Ye; that’s correct.

**Jeff:** You’re outvoted, Tom. *(Laughter)* But we know something about Tom now that we didn’t know before. And that is that Tom is a hopeless romantic. *(Laughter)* He wants his wife to love him, and he does not care about respect. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** I think Tom is a hopeless romantic; I think he is. He’s hopeless, but I think he is a romantic. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Tom:** My wife says that too. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** On the serious side of that,--

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Sig:** I think Ted brought up a good point about his wife. And I would agree with my wife being the same, being more emotionally intelligent, and the statement you gave about the homeless missions and the women on the board, or whatever.

**Ted:** In women there is a defiance—

**Jeff:** Well, I want you men to think about—Oh, sorry.

**Sig:** Well, let me finish my point.

**Jeff:** Yes, please.

**Sig:** You say that the feminist movement is bad, or whatever. But there are two other factors going on. And maybe it’s just America; I don’t know. But there is also a visible incompetence of men, or a visible abuse of men toward women, especially in business. Maybe not so much in the home, Jeff, if they’re following the model that you’ve described, where they discuss. What should we do? Should we move? Should we invest, or whatever? Even in the Anglican church, Bishop, and the Episcopal Church, there have been a lot more women going into the priesthood because there is a lack of men going in! So maybe that’s not a good argument. There are some other reasons as to why feminism has risen.

**Jeff:** Well let’s face it, right? Men will abdicate their positions and women will fill them. And that’s just a manifestation of the curse.

**Sig:** Exactly; that’s a good summary.

**Jeff:** That’s a manifestation of the curse, right?

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** That’s not healthy. So for instance, I had a woman say to me that she and her husband were working in Mongolia. And she asked me one time. She said, “Don’t you believe that we ought to ordain women to the ministry in Mongolia if there are no men to ordain?” And I said, “no. No, you ought not to.”

And she said, “Then there won’t be any pastors.”

And I said, “God will raise them up in his time. But until then I don’t think that you should place a structure.” I mean, that’s what’s happening in China right now. They’re having a problem with that because that’s what has happened.

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**Bishop:** Just as an example, in the Episcopal Church the ordination of women took place just shortly after the General Convention said that it was not appropriate. I think there were six retired bishops ordaining women in disobedience, without any studies as to whether it was biblical or not. That’s how that started for us. It was a sad beginning.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** And we’ve paid the price for it ever since.

**Jeff:** Yes. Incidentally, this is what I love about R. C. Sproul. What I love about R. C. Sproul is that he got to the end of his life. I mean I love Billy Graham, too. But in my mind Billy Graham and R. C. Sproul are like a study in contrasts, because Billy Graham gets to the end of his life and he’s making universalistic statements and stuff like that. And the Billy Graham Association is constantly having to come out and say that this is what he really meant. And R. C. Sproul just stayed steady to the end. Even in his old age he doesn’t sort of wander and sort of incorporate into his teaching what he wishes things were, whatever that may have happened to have been. He kept that stuff to himself.

And you know, I pray, as I move into my older years, I pray that I will stay true to the faith and not wander from it, because that’s always possible. You’re saying that with eleven retired bishops that can happen easily.

So anyway, I think that what we’ll do is that we’ll stay on this for the next time. What’s that?

**Jim:** We’ll think about it.

**Ted:** It’s tough.

**Jeff:** It is. And if we only have time to cover—What’s that?

**Sig:** It’s very serious.

**Jeff:** It is a very serious subject.

**Sig:** We should invite our wives for next week. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Let’s pray together. *(Laughter)* Father in heaven, thank You for this day, and for the blessing of the time that You have given. Lord, we pray that You’ll strengthen us in Your word. And we pray that You’ll make us faithful. Lord, that’s what we really pray for. We certainly pray for many other things, but faithfulness is an all-encompassing virtue for which we ask this morning. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*