

Evangelism and Marriage

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[0:00] My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today. I'm going to jump right in this morning.

You know, often I'll kind of give you guys a little bit of an introduction, but we have a lot to cover. And I want to honor your time and our time together and make sure I keep this on focus. And so I'm just going to remind you that we're in the book of 1 Peter, and the book of 1 Peter is a book about people who are living in a world where they feel out of place because they follow after Jesus, and they're facing opposition because they follow after Jesus as well.

And we have seen several key principles over the last several weeks, and these key principles have been applied in multiple situations. So key principle number one, 1 Peter 2, 9, you're a priesthood. And as a priesthood, you're proclaiming God's excellencies to the world, and you're representing God to the world. So people learn about God because of you and the way that you behave.

Second, so that's principle number one, priesthood.

We represent God to the world. Principle number two, we want to have honorable conduct so that when people speak against us as evildoers, they still see the good that we're doing, and that's 1 Peter 2, verse 12.

[1:12] We want them to see what we're doing, and that would lead them to know God and glorify God. And then finally, we're told in 1 Peter 2, 17, to honor everyone. And those three principles are what we've been going through the last several weeks, so we've applied those to government.

How do we relate to our government in such a way that people know Jesus more because of us? How do we relate to our government in such a way that even though they speak against us, they can see our good deeds and they glorify God because of it?

How can we interact with government in a way that we honor everyone? Last week, we talked about masters and slaves, and we applied it to employment. How can we work in the workplace in such a way that people come to know Jesus?

How can we work in the workplace in such a way that people honor and glorify God? How can we work in the workplace in a way that we honor everyone? And this week, we're going to continue those principles, and we're going to apply them to a different situation.

So rather than government, rather than the workplace, we're now going to be talking about how this applies to marriage. How in marriage, and it's not going to be just marriage in general, it's going to be a very specific situation.

[2:17] This passage is talking to Christian women who are married to non-Christian men. It's a passage about Christian women who are married to non-Christian men, and how can they apply these principles as well.

These principles of being a priesthood, principles of doing good and bringing honor and glory to God, and then also principles of honoring everyone. Now, if you were in the new members class last week, you heard me tell this joke, but most of you didn't hear it, so I'm going to share it with you.

Stories told of a pastor who was single, and he taught a Sunday school class on parenting. And the class was called Ten Commandments of Parenting. Now, later along, he got married, and he had a kid, and he taught the class again.

And this time, the title changed slightly. It wasn't the Ten Commandments of Parenting. It was actually the Five Commandments of Parenting. Now, that was when he had one child. Later on, he and his wife went on to have more children.

They had maybe four or five. And he finally taught the class a third time. And the title changed one more time. It was gone from Ten Commandments on Parenting to Five Commandments on

Parenting. And then finally, it was a few suggestions about parenting.

[3 : 31] I'm going to preach to you about Christian marriage, and I'm a single man. And our hope is not in me as a preacher. Our hope is in God's word that it's good, and he has something to say to us.

I've also thought about this this week, and I realized it's not in the cards for me to ever be a Christian woman married to a non-Christian man. And so no matter what happens to me, I will never be in this situation that we're going to look at this morning.

And yet, God has given us his word. He's given it to instruct us how to live in this world, and it is good for us. And so that's our hope as we come to it, not in our preacher, but in our Father God that we would hear his voice.

And that's our prayer every Sunday. And so it's with that that we come to 1 Peter. We're all the way in chapter 3 now, and we're going to be starting at verse 1. And as we come to this, remember that this is God's word.

And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold, and that it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

[4 : 37] And so that's why we read now, starting in chapter 3, verse 1. 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. Verse 3. 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 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.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Father in heaven, we thank you that our hope is in you, and our hope is that you speak clearly to us through your word.

We thank you that you speak clearly to us about the hope and confidence we have in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on our behalf. And we also thank you that you haven't left us alone to wonder how to live, but you've given us your word to speak.

[5 : 57] And so we ask that you would speak clearly to us, that we would understand what it is that you want us to know and to believe and to live. And we ask these things not because we have earned them or deserve them, but because Jesus has earned them and deserve them for us.

And so we ask them in his name. Amen. I want you to imagine with me for a little bit. So I was a classics major in college, which means I studied a lot about ancient Greece and Rome.

And this is a letter that's written to people, as I've mentioned before, who are living in the Roman Empire in the first century. And I just want you to imagine this letter was written in the 60s A.D. And I want you to imagine there's a man.

His name is Cassius, and Cassius is living in the 50s A.D. And Cassius meets this woman, and they fall in love. Her name's Lydia. And they have just a wonderful marriage. Cassius and Lydia, they are on the same page about worshiping the emperor.

They understand kind of the logic, right? The greater someone is, the more worthy they are of worship. She understands her role in the household, and they're also good with the household gods. So she follows him and the ways he leads worship, not just out in the temples, but also in their household with the gods.

[7 : 11] And she understands the importance of the local gods, and she understands the importance of Jupiter and all the different ways. But there comes a point in their marriage where things get a little difficult. So maybe let's say they marry in 52 A.D.

And word comes to this town, whichever town it is in Asia Minor, about this man named Jesus. Now, Cassius isn't convinced. He thinks this is silly. Everyone knows you don't worship a Jewish man, and not just a Jewish man, but a Jewish man who died on a cross.

However, Lydia is interested. And as Lydia comes to learn more about Jesus, she realizes this is actually something she believes.

She's been hearing from these people about the fact that Jesus died, and not only did he die, he actually rose again from the dead, and that he offers forgiveness of sins. And this is something that

she's wondered about for a long time.

How can the gods actually help her with the things that she feels guilty for, and how can they help her to have true change? And so Lydia actually converts to Christianity. Now, this puts Cassius in a terrible situation, because, of course, he's a good Roman man, and like any good Roman man, as everyone knows, it's the wife's job to worship the gods of the husband.

[8 : 22] And so people start to talk about him and his marriage. Now, have you heard about Cassius and Lydia? I mean, she doesn't even go to worship the gods with him anymore. Can you imagine?

Yeah, I'm so glad that my wife understands the importance of really honoring the emperor. And I just can't imagine. I mean, you know, it's women these days. They don't understand that you have to worship the most powerful man available.

And obviously, this man who died on a cross, he's a joke. I mean, not only did he live as just a middle-class person, but he died the worst death possible. I mean, how ignorant do you have to be to worship someone like that?

There's this talk maybe going around. There's something subversive. There's a sense in which Lydia's being rebellious. She's refusing to worship the gods. She's going out to these Christian worship services, and potentially, Cassius is wondering, what does she do?

Is she looking for another spouse? How do I know that she's going to be pure in her conduct when she's out in the house? I'm certainly not going to go hang out with the Christians. I wouldn't be caught dead, seen with a group like that.

[9 : 30] However, he ends up talking about it with his friend, Marcellus. Now, Marcellus has a wife named Cassia. And Marcellus is a great confidant.

You know, Cassius feels really ashamed because he can't get his wife to worship his gods. It makes him feel like less of a man. It's like he can't run his household well. And Marcellus, you know, sympathizes with him.

He's like, I'm so glad that my wife worships the gods. She doesn't have a problem with this. Like, she understands the logic of the world. We worship powerful men. We worship emperors. There's more than one God, too.

The Christians, they believe this crazy thing that there's only one God, and it doesn't even make sense. However, Marcellus has noticed something. He said, I feel your frustration.

I can only imagine how frustrating it would be to be married to a woman who wouldn't come to worship Jupiter with me. However, I've been talking to my wife, and she said a lot of things about your wife have really changed.

[10 : 32] You know, it used to be when your wife would show up to hang out with the other women, she would tell them every mistake you had made. And she would share about kind of, I mean, I even knew some of the stuff.

Do you remember that time we talked? Yeah, you remember that. We won't talk about that. And not only that, you know, she used to be spending all your money on these fine clothes and going out. And it seems like, I mean, it seems like she's really been working hard to just be the best spouse possible.

So on the one hand, like, I can kind of understand your struggle, but then there are times, don't tell anyone I said this to you. There are times I wonder, maybe I want a Christian wife, too. Now, I wouldn't say that publicly.

I wouldn't say it publicly. But, you know, my wife is still going out, and when she, I mean, we're having all this conflict, and she still, every time we have an argument, she goes out and she tells everyone about it.

I mean, on the one hand, you're dishonored because your wife won't worship the gods with you. On the other hand, I'm dishonored just because of my wife's behavior. I mean, she just, I'm trying, but it's not been working.

[11 : 39] That is the situation that this passage is addressing. We've talked about the fact that the Christians who are receiving this letter feel out of place in the world.

Some of them don't just feel out of place in the world. They feel out of place in their marriages, and they feel out of place in their marriages because they are married to men who are not Christians, and being married to a man who's not a Christian and practicing as a Christian means that what they're doing looks like they're being rebellious to their husbands, and so Peter's giving them advice

in the same way that he's given everyone advice about how to interact with the government, in the same way that he's given slaves advice about how to interact with masters, he's also giving these women advice about how to interact with their non-Christian husbands.

How can you give honor and glory to God in your marriage? That's the specific context here. Now, he is addressing all women generally. He says in verse one, wives, be subject to your husbands. He's addressing all wives, but then he says, so that even if some do not obey the word, in other words, they're not Christians, they may be one without a word. The goal then, the goal that he's focusing on, even though he's talking to Christian, women who are married to Christians and non-Christians, his goal here is to talking to women married to non-Christians.

This is how they're going to win their husbands for Christ. This is going along with 1 Peter 2.12. This is the good deeds that they're gonna act out. They're gonna lead people to honor and glorify God.

[13:07] Now, of course, this doesn't just happen in the ancient Roman world. It also happens today. About 10 years ago, I went on a mission trip for a summer to Ireland, and one of the things they had us do while we were working at this church is they said, you know, we really want you to have lunch with a different family every Sunday so you get to know different people in the church.

And one Sunday, we went over to lunch, and there was something kind of strange in the air. We are at this house, this man and this woman, and the man just, he seemed angry.

He seemed, he was just mean. I mean, he started making fun of Americans. He told us, you know, in America, I hear they only drink blue milk, not white milk. We're like, we don't know what that is. We've never heard of blue milk before. I mean, the man was annoyed. And we found out later, this man wasn't a Christian. Here's his Christian wife trying to show hospitality to her church, kind of against what her husband would like.

And later, the pastor shared with us that this is common. It's common in Europe because like many places in the world, there's a shortage of marriageable Christian men. And so there's a temptation, as we talked about in Nehemiah, for a woman saying, well, I'm either not gonna be married or I'm gonna be married to a non-Christian.

[14:19] And so this is a live situation. It's a live situation in the ancient world, and it's also a live situation today. And so that is the context that Peter's writing to. He's writing to people who are disadvantaged.

So he's written to slaves. Now he's writing to these wives, and they're disadvantaged as well. They're in a bad position. They're in a bad position because they're married to a non-Christian. They're in a bad position culturally.

Culturally, the expectation is, obviously, you worship the gods of your husband. And they're in a bad position partially because of their sex. They just have less influence in the family than their husband does.

And so Peter's giving them advice about how they should live in that difficult situation. Just like slaves, just like people who are under the authority of the government, they too also have to find a way to be subversive.

Remember I said last week, Christianity's not revolutionary, it's radical. And so they have to find a way to be radical in their marriages without being revolutionary. At the same time, deep breath, by the way.

[15:27] At the same time, this is a passage that he's writing, not just to these specific women, but to all women who are married. And he's telling them how to interact, not just with any man, right? Verse one, but your own husbands. Now, you might be thinking at this point, well, Matthew, that's great.

You explained to us last week how Peter wasn't actually advocating for slavery. He was just telling them how to operate within slavery. Hear what you're saying there, and I hear what you're saying here.

He's not actually advocating for there being any kind of hierarchy of authority in marriage. He's just telling them this is the way it is culturally, and they also, just like slavery was wrong, they need to operate within this wrong system.

There's only two problems at that. Problem number one, he actually addresses all wives here. He says, verse one, wives, some of you have husbands who don't obey the word.

And then secondly, in the book of Ephesians, Paul writes, and he talks about the relationship between men and women who are both Christians. And he talks about it not from a cultural standpoint, but from a theological standpoint. And so we're gonna talk about that this morning.

[16:27] And I'm gonna say up front, this is a challenging topic. And like I say, every time we come to a challenging topic, I'm not gonna say everything, I'm gonna say something. And I'm always happy to talk more afterwards.

I understand many of you may disagree with me on this, but this is what God is telling us in his word in 1 Peter chapter three, and so we're gonna jump in. Multiple situations, right? People who are married to Christians, people who are married to non-Christians.

God teaches in his word, God has set up, in the way that he set up the world, he set up a chain of command in the family. God has given responsibility to lead his family.

That's why it says here in verse one, your own husband. His wife is his closest and most valued ally in that leadership. However, that leadership ultimately falls on the shoulders of the husband.

And so it's not a leader-follower situation. Don't think of it that way. I don't think there's some truth to that. I don't think that's the most helpful way to think about it. There's some terms that have come out now in leadership theories and books where people will talk about first chair leaders and second chair leaders, which means often there's two leaders.

[17:35] One of them has ultimate responsibility, but the other one has tremendous power and responsibility as well. So you could think about a president and a vice president. You could think about a pastor and an assistant pastor. You could think about a major versus a colonel or a major versus a captain.

There's leadership involved with everyone. However, there's someone who also has greater authority and greater responsibility. Both of those are true. So, and I'm not gonna use the word complementarian, by the way, because first of all, that's something that didn't even come around and that's a word in a category that wasn't used until the 1970s or 1980s.

It's not always helpful. So I'm just gonna talk in terms of leadership. First chair leader, second chair leader. I think that's gonna, first of all, make a little bit more sense and it's gonna help us resolve some of the objections and some of the concerns about what it is the Bible teaches us about Christian marriage.

Second of all, both people, men and women, have equal value and dignity. And we know this intuitively in leadership positions. When I was a teacher, I had principals over me. They had authority over me. Many of them, most of them were women.

I never thought, well, I'm just a teacher and they're a principal. So obviously they have more worth and dignity as a person, right? They had more authority. There's no difference in our worth and dignity as a person.

[18:47] If you're in the military, you might think, okay, I'm a captain. This person's a major. That doesn't mean that person has more authority than you do or they have more authority. It doesn't mean they have more dignity or value than you do. And so that's the idea that the Bible that gives us, the model that the Bible gives us for marriage.

It's a family. God's given responsibility and authority to the husband. By the way, it's not just authority, it's responsibility. Remember in Genesis, very beginning, Adam and Eve sin.

Who does God go to talk to first? Goes and talks to Adam. Adam, what have you done?

So there's two sides to this coin, right? It's not just, okay, this man has more authority in the household. Also, this man's gonna have to answer to God for how he leads his household.

By the way, we're gonna talk about that next week. I've saved, this is gonna be next week, the first time at this church I've ever preached a whole sermon on one verse. So if you're wondering why we're just talking about wives, just wait for next week.

[19:51] 1 Peter 3, chapter 3, verse 7. God has also set up the family in such a way that men seem to have an extra level of influence and responsibility.

Now, you can argue with me about this. There's some secular researchers named John and Julie Gottman who do marriage research. They are not Christians at all. They're just observing what happens in relationships. Part of their finding is relationships rise and fall ultimately based on what the man does.

Doesn't mean women don't have influence and responsibility. Just means that men have an extra level of influence. If you don't believe me, ask someone who's married. Ask a wife who's married who's tried to get her family to head in a different direction but her husband doesn't agree with her. Okay? If you don't believe me, just ask. So that's the baseline. So another deep breath. Then we have to talk about this that raises all kinds of questions, right?

What does this mean? What does it not mean? There are two ways we can err on this. One way we can err is we can make it mean something really strange and weird. The other way we can err is by making it mean nothing at all and explaining it away.

[21 : 07] So first of all, what does it not mean? Let's avoid it being strange and weird. It does not mean there are no boundaries in a marriage. If you don't know what I'm talking about, there's a wonderful series of books by a man named John Townsend and a man named Henry Cloud who've written a book called Boundaries.

They wrote another book called Boundaries in Marriage. I strongly encourage everyone to read those books. If you grew up in a family or you were in a marriage where there are not good boundaries, it will be a painful read.

And it will be worth it. So this doesn't mean there aren't boundaries. And this is part of why I'm gonna talk in terms of first chair leaders and second chair leaders. Like in any leadership situation, just because someone has more authority doesn't mean they don't have boundaries around them. Okay, so it doesn't mean that. It's be subject to. It's not the word obey. So in the Bible, when it addresses children, it tells children you need to obey. It tells wives, be subject to your husband. Different word. Not the same thing. Finally, this goes along. Well, not finally. We're going all along the list. This is in the list of boundaries. It doesn't mean you never say no.

[22 : 18] Again, if you're a wife. One of the great things about this passage is at the end, it tells us that Sarah is our model. Now, if you're familiar with the story of the Old Testament, you know that Sarah was not a mousy little yes woman.

In fact, there were times that Sarah told Abraham no. Now, there are, we're gonna have to, you're gonna have to work with me a little bit culturally because this is something that we don't struggle with today but that people struggle with in the ancient Near East.

So just go with me. In the ancient Near East, whether you can believe it or not, sometimes husbands and wives would have disagreements about the appropriate way to raise their children. Now, I know that doesn't happen anymore but it happened with Abraham and Sarah.

And at one point in Genesis chapter 21, you can go read it later, Abraham and Sarah have a disagreement about how to raise their kids. Sarah basically tells Abraham no.

Now, you're gonna want, wives, you're gonna wanna write this one down. Genesis 21, 12, this is your verse. God comes to Abraham and he says, and I quote, whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you.

[23 : 31] I took that out of context. There's your verse. Now, sometimes Abraham needed to tell Sarah no and he didn't. If you read the story of Genesis, you know, there's a time when Sarah came to Abraham and she gave him this idea.

It was not a good idea and he did it and it didn't end well. Peter, as we've talked about, was deeply flawed and imperfect. Sarah and Abraham's marriage was also deeply flawed and imperfect.

And Peter says, if you wanna know what this looks like, look to Sarah. So it doesn't mean there aren't any boundaries. It doesn't mean you don't say no.

It doesn't, and also does not mean you put up with abuse. Okay, we don't use this passage in any way to justify abuse and I'm gonna give you strong arguments from various sides. First of all, we've already talked about abuse in this book.

The very previous section, the assumption is that slaves are actually going to be abused.

Remember he says, you might be beaten unjustly. That doesn't appear in this section because even the pagans know abuse isn't okay.

[24 : 43] Second of all, tolerating abuse doesn't make you a good follower. There's a passage later in this book where it says, it uses the same exact word and it says, young men, be subject to the elders.

Now, if you saw one of our elders and there was a young man and that elder was just yelling at him and then the elder got so angry that he punched the wall and the drywall went in, you wouldn't say, yeah, you just need to be subject to that.

Man, that person's doing such a good job being subject to the elders. No, you would say, that's ridiculous. That person has no boundaries, right? So this is not a passage, I'm just gonna camp out on this for a second, and this is not a passage that means stay in an abusive situation.

That's why I'm using these leadership terms because that wouldn't make sense in any other leadership situation. We talked last week, I said, be a good employee. No one in their right mind

would say, yeah, one of the best ways you can be a good employee and witness for Jesus is by just putting up with whatever abuse your employer throws at you.

Same thing's true in this situation. Whatever makes sense in another leadership situation, apply it to this situation. That helps us get out of some of the strange questions that come up with these things.

[26 : 01] Okay, and people always ask all kinds of questions now. Okay, how does this apply in real life? Does this mean that the husband has to do X and the wife has to do X and this person can only do this and this person can only do that?

I'm not gonna answer all those questions, I'm just gonna give you the same paradigm. What would be appropriate in any other leadership situation where there's a first chair leader and a second chair leader?

Does this mean, people ask this, does this mean that the husband has to manage the finances? I'm not gonna answer that question for you. Is that something that's required in any other leadership situation with a first chair leader and a second chair leader?

I'll let you figure that out on your own. By the way, Peter doesn't tell these people exactly what it looks like. He leaves it to them to figure out how to be subject to their own husbands. So that's all, that's what it doesn't mean.

So one temptation is to make it seem, mean something very weird and very strange. The other temptation is to make it mean nothing at all. Except Peter actually says, be subject to your husbands.

[27 : 07] So what does it mean? It means be the best ally that you can. Be the best second chair leader that you can to a first chair leader. Support, this goes back to what we talked about last week with employers, support the leadership of your husband as much as possible within reason.

Support the leadership of your husband as much as you can as possible within reason. Second, the authority that God gives to husbands is a real authority. There might come a time in your marriage where you guys disagree.

And godliness means you're going to move forward as a couple without sabotaging your husband, without undermining him. And Peter tells us that kind of action is so powerful that it could call someone who's not a Christian to come to know Jesus.

Imagine how much more powerful it is when your spouse already knows Jesus. So it doesn't mean we put up with abuse, there's no boundaries, we don't say no.

It also means support your husband's leadership as much as possible. And sometimes there will be times when you disagree and there has to be a decision that's made. In your disagreement, support your husband as much as possible.

[28 : 24] Now again, like we said last week and previous weeks, it doesn't mean you do things that are immoral, unethical, that goes along with the boundaries conversation. But that's what Peter's talking about here when he says, verse one, be subject to your own husbands so that they may be won without a word.

In other words, you're going to win them by your conduct, not by constantly telling them about Christianity. When they see the way that you act. Now we have a lot to talk about this morning and I've already said lots and lots of words, so I'm just going to say a few things briefly about these verses that come next.

Verse three, don't let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair, putting on of gold jewelry, the clothing you wear, some translations say fine clothing, 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 precious. What all of those things have in common, the fine hair and the gold jewelry and the clothing, all of those things are very expensive. In other words, the focus should not be showing off to other people how much money you have.

He's not saying you need to dress as frumpy as possible. He is saying you're in a first century context and there's lots of women who use these things to show off how wealthy they are.

[29 : 42] That's not what impresses God. In fact, this word here where it says at the very end of verse four, beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God's sight is very precious.

Precious is a hard word in English. What that means actually is very valuable. Don't wear expensive clothes. Have an expensive character is what he's saying. Put your time and your effort and your resources into your character, not into going around and showing off to everyone how much wealth

you have.

Also, sometimes women who dress this way are doing it for more reasons than just to show off their wealth. They were showing that maybe they were interested in someone other than their current husband being their husband. So don't dress in such a way that you want everyone to know how wealthy you are and also don't dress in such a way that your husband has to wonder whether you're looking for a new spouse.

That's all I'm going to say about those verses. Okay. Verses five and six. We've talked about this before. This is an encouragement. I've already discussed the fact that Sarah is our model and he's telling this woman, look, you're living with a non-Christian husband.

You're a Christian. While you may feel out of place in your marriage, you're actually part of a long lineage of godly women when you do these things.

[31 : 02] It's kind of like what I say before the confession of faith. We're confessing with people throughout the centuries. Peter says, look, you might feel very alone in your marriage right now because your husband's not a Christian. When you try to be the best wife you can to bring him to Jesus, you're part of centuries of godly women.

You're part of that community now. So, and I think this is one of the main points of verses five and six, be encouraged. Be encouraged. Sarah sets the example.

All these things about calling him Lord, submitting to their own husbands, essentially what Peter's saying is, everything I've said before, Sarah did that. Submitting to her own husband, Sarah did that, so do what Sarah did.

If you want to see what Sarah did, go back and read Genesis in the late teens and 20s, mid-teens and 20s. In other words, you're in your family right now, you're out of place, but you're part of a larger family.

Okay, another deep breath. I'm going to give you guys a bunch of applications, so that's all the explanation I have for you for this passage. If you are a woman and you're married to a non-Christian, same thing last week about employees, be the best wife you can.

[32 : 19] God uses that to bring your husband to faith in Christ. And he's also pointing out another principle, sometimes family members are the hardest ones to talk about the gospel with.

What's going to win, you all know this, not just in marriage relationships, but in other family relationships. Sometimes, if you're closely related to someone, you might be the last person who's able to speak with influence about that.

So be subversive. What do you have to work with? Impress them with your character. Remember, I told you that story earlier, Cassius, he's just, hey, there's some things that are hard, but man, things have really gotten a lot better too when my wife's become a Christian.

If you are a woman, not married to a non-Christian, but married to a Christian, your husband is imperfect and flawed in many ways. Elrond was not wrong when he said, men are weak.

And, praise God that you're married to a Christian. There are worse things than being married to someone that has faith in Jesus Christ.

[33 : 34] Praise God that your weak, flawed, imperfect, Elrond husband loves Jesus. And, if a Christian woman can affect a non-Christian man so much by supporting his leadership, how much more are you able to support yours?

Peter's calling these women who are in a difficult situation to support their husbands. How much more can you support a Christian husband? If you're a woman married to a non-Christian or a Christian, do whatever you can to support your husband's leadership.

Do anything a good supportive follower would do. Do anything a good second chair leader would do to support a first chair leader. That includes, hey, maybe you're problem solving. Maybe you're telling them things that you think might be problematic about their plans.

It doesn't mean that you're a yes woman. Maybe it means that you are keeping your disagreements private instead of spreading them out to everyone. I'll make one other application point here. One way you can be subject to your husband is by not letting everyone in the church know about your husband's previous failures.

And not making sure everyone knows every time you guys have a disagreement. That's one way to honor your husband. It's the same thing we do in other parts of leadership. There are times when we as elders of this church we don't all agree on something.

[34 : 53] But we don't go out and advertise to everyone the things that we disagree about. Now, I'm not saying don't tell anyone. One of the things Satan loves more than anything else is to isolate

people.

And so I'm not saying don't talk to anyone about the struggles in your marriage. What I am saying is talk to someone rather than everyone. Talk to someone rather than everyone. By the way, who does the Bible say?

It's Bible trivia for you. I've got a Bible trivia question and then a Cheyenne Mountain trivia question. Who does the Bible say should teach women how to be good spouses?

To be good wives. Does the Bible say pastors should teach women how to be good wives? Shake your head. Does the Bible say that husbands should teach their wives how to be good wives?

Shake your head. Who is supposed to teach women how to be good wives? Older women. Titus 2. Titus 2 is a book written by Paul to a pastor telling him how to run a church.

[36 : 01] And he tells him all the things he should be telling people and then he stops and tells him and if you're having if people are having trouble in their marriages you go and recruit the older women to help the younger women.

It's not your job to go. Brothers and sisters, in this church we are blessed with an overwhelming number of older godly women.

That's where you all were supposed to say praise God. Okay, let's try this again. In this church we are blessed with an overwhelming number of older godly women.

Praise God. I've been at churches before where they've been praying that they would have older people in their congregation who have wisdom. If you're struggling in your marriage, if you need help knowing how to be a good spouse, your problem is going to be choosing which woman to go and seek counsel from.

Good luck. Now, Cheyenne Mountain trivia. How many pastors' wives do we have at this church?

[37 : 07] Don't say a number right away. Think about it. How many? How many? By my count we have at least three.

We've got Maurice Fairbrother, we have Nancy Carlson, and we have Deborah Nash, each of whom have spent decades as pastors' wives.

If you want to meet with me to talk about how to be a good wife, I'll come and meet with you, but I'm bringing Deborah with me and she's going to do the talking and I'm going to take notes. Okay?

Yeah, that was really good, Deborah.

Can you say that again so I can write it down? That was great. By the way, we have great Sunday school teachers in this church, especially in our adult community. Love Al, love Jim, love Chris.

Best Sunday school class I've ever been out of this church. Taught by Autumn Cruz and Deborah Nash. If you were there, you were there and you know what it was like.

[38 : 10] If you weren't there, sorry. Okay, finally, if you're a single woman, first of all, do not marry a non-Christian.

Peter is writing and explaining that this is a form of suffering. I preached an entire sermon in May about why we don't marry non-Christians. It is still on the website.

Okay, that's all I'm going to say. Second, so don't marry a non-Christian. By the way, when I say single women, I'm not just talking about women who are 22 and 35 and 47 and 67 and 82. I am talking about women who are also 5 and 8 and 12 and 16.

If you are not a man and you are not married, you are a single woman. Congratulations. So kids, this is for you too. Marry someone who you're willing to follow.

Marry someone whose leadership you respect and you're excited about. Okay, character trumps everything else. I wish for all of you that you will find spouses that are fun and sexy.

[39 : 19] However, they also need to be leaders that you're willing to follow. If you're not willing to follow them, please don't marry them. And then finally, if you're a single woman, I talked to a single woman one time and she told me, I am preparing for marriage.

The way I want to prepare for marriage is by being the absolute best friend I can be to my female friends. That's not bad advice. There's a friendship aspect to marriage.

There is also, I'm just going to say it, there's an authority aspect to marriage. One way you prepare for marriage is by respecting the authorities in your life right now as much as possible. If you're a kid at home and you want to have a happy marriage 10 or 15 years from now, respect not just your dad, respect your dad and your mom's leadership as much as possible now.

Don't expect to show up in marriage you've been spending your whole life, right, disrespecting the people in authority over you. Oh, but this is going to change the day I get married, right? That's not

how character formation works. They tell missionaries, don't expect to show up to the field and suddenly just start evangelizing everyone when you've never shared the gospel before. If you have a boss, whether it's a man or a woman, how can you support that person's leadership? That's one way you prepare for marriage. Then for everyone, this is the same broad principle that we've seen over and over again.

[40 : 45] We continue to bring honor and glory to God through our actions. God brings people to faith in him because of what we do. It doesn't mean that we're the ones doing it.

It means that he uses our actions to bring people to faith. And we do it for all the same reasons that Peter's given to us. We do it for the sake of Jesus. Jesus is the one who's made suffering safe. Remember, we talked about that last week. When Jesus made suffering safe, he submitted to the authority of God the Father. He said, not your will be done, but my will be done.

And Jesus is the one who offers these people hope that they don't have to fear. That's how this ends. We can walk the path of suffering. It's a Christian married to a non-Christian.

We can walk the path of obedience because our fear is of God, not of man. And so our hope is in God, not man as well. And so we're able to do that because God is the one who gives us our hope.

[41 : 48] He's the one who has suffered before us. He's the one who submitted and showed us what it looks like. And we honor His authority and we also honor the other authorities that we have. I appreciate you all's patience today.

I know this is a little bit of a longer topic, but it's important. And this is why we preach through books of the Bible so that we don't skip things that are hard or challenging to talk about. And so this is God's word.

And just in the same way that it is every week, it's for our good and it's for God's glory. And so I ask that you pray with me as we conclude. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for your word that's good even when it's hard and challenging.

We ask that you would use it to help us and strengthen us. You'd use it to build us up. I ask for the marriages in this church that those marriages would grow more and more to look like you and your relationship to the church.

That spouses would be sacrificing each for the other and that people would look and they would see the husbands and the wives in this church and they would be so struck and want to know more about what it is that makes their marriage and their home a place of beauty and a place of peace.

[43 : 02] And we ask all these things thankful that we don't have to earn them but that Jesus has earned them for us and so we ask them in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.