

Hope for Marriage

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[0 : 0 0] Good, good. Those of you who don't know me, my name is Jesse, one of the pastors here. Glad that you're with us. And those who will be listening to this online, I first got to say this, you guys missed out on an amazing time of worship this morning. So glad you're keeping up with us online. But yeah, just been a sweet time already. And trust that you guys have felt that too.

We are continuing on in the series in 1 Peter. We call it Hope in Exile. And Peter is teaching us who we are as Christians. He's saying, hey, this is who you are. You are sojourners in your life.

You are pilgrims passing through. Where you live is not your homeland. Your home, because you have been saved by Jesus, your home is in heaven. You're a citizens of heaven. And because of that, we live counterculture. We don't live by the moors of what society says we should live by. There's a different set of values. There's a different way we live. And so we're learning how to live toward this new hope we have in Jesus, which is so important. It's following the way of Jesus.

And as we've learned over the past couple of weeks, it's living a life surrendered to God. It's living a life surrendered to his will and for his glory. And when we do that and when we follow Jesus, we can't help but change the way we live. Our lives are changed. The way we intersect with various parts of our lives are even totally different. So the way we approach politics and the hope that we put in politics is totally different to what it used to be. The way we approach work and think about work and even the hope we can put into work, it changes. And those values are different. And today we're going to look at how this, living this way, understanding who we are, how this brings hope into our marriage. And guys, we need hope for marriage in this life, right? One of my favorite bands in the 90s, yes, I'm that old. I was a youth in the 90s.

They had this lyric, they had this song that went like this. I was always taught that boy meets girl, fall in love, get married, and forget the world. Nine months later, sweet baby's on the way, kiss him on the cheek, and life's okay. And the irony is that the name of the song is called Ball and Chain, right? And many of us, we grow up with this idealistic concept of marriage, right? Oh, and they lived happily ever after. And we go into marriage thinking, yeah, that's definitely going to be us. And then we get married, right? Oh boy. Marriage can often seem more like John Mayer's heartbreak warfare than they lived happily ever after. It's a battle of wills. It's two people coming together with independent wills, and often what that creates is conflict, right? Who is going to win? Who is going to overcome the other and win supremacy?

[3 : 0 0] And many of us have been in a marriage like this, or we are in a marriage like this, or we grew up with parents who marriage was like this. And so either way, it's easy to become jaded towards marriage and to start to think that, you know what marriage is? Marriage is where love goes to die, not where love flourishes. Or we're in a marriage and we don't know how to fix the problems in our marriage. They seem insurmountable. But here's the thing, guys, the gospel gives us hope for marriage. And I want to say to you today, man, if you're in a tough situation right in your marriage, the gospel gives you healing for your marriage. It's how our marriages are healed and restored.

And so Peter gives hope for marriage by addressing each part, each role, each person that makes up the marriage. He speaks to husbands and he speaks to wives. And he starts with the wives first, not because he thinks they're the ones that are the major problem. He just starts with the wives first.

That's all. Don't read into it, okay? So we're in 1 Peter chapter 3. We're going to start in 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.

So we start out with this likewise phrase, right? And we had just been finished going through how, like, we're supposed to live humble lives of submission, like how Jesus did, entrusting ourselves to God so that we can do that. And he says, likewise, how you're acting in politics, how you're approaching and thinking of work, likewise, do the same thing. And he addressed his wives. Be subject, be submitted to your own husbands. You don't have to be submitted to every guy in the room, ladies, all right? You get to be submitted to the one that you belong to and to the one that belongs to you, okay? That's a beautiful thing. And here's the thing that he's getting at. Hope in marriage requires you to surrender your will. Hope in marriage requires me to surrender my will.

Now, you might be thinking, whoa, just that is a insane, crazy statement you just made, right? It seems like you want me to become a doormat. It seems like what you're wanting me to do is put my hope in my husband and give up all my rights, give up my whole will, and just follow him around blindly no matter what he wants to do. But that's not at all what I'm saying. And I don't think that's what the Bible's getting at here. Let me have a chance to convince you that that is not what it's about.

[5 : 33] We can look to Jesus, right? The quick and easy answer is, well, look at Jesus. He lived a full life. He lived a life of meaning. He lived a life that he was totally satisfied. And he lived a life of surrender of his own will, right? When he was in the garden before he went to the cross, he said, Lord, man, not my will, but yours be done. He lived a life of surrender, surrendering his will all the time. And you can live this way. You can live a life where you surrender your will and still be fully satisfied and fulfilled. And this seems so countercultural.

This seems so counterintuitive. But it's the way the gospel calls us to live. And it's not a way of imposing your will, desires, and dreams through force. See, we have to figure out what we want more.

Do we want to win the argument? Do we want to win the moment? Or do we want to win a person? See, the pathway to winning over a person begins with laying down the belief and letting go of the belief that your rights and your way are what's most important. And that's true for husbands too, okay? We're talking to wives right now, but husbands, you need to open your ears and let that soak in a little bit, okay? And that's really different to how we are called to live today. We are told today, winning is everything. Winning means getting my way. But relationship conflict and dysfunction starts with that unchecked attitude that says to, I have to win this moment. I have to win this argument.

I have to overcome this objection. And you know what? We're instinctively motivated that way. Because we're creatures of desire. Check out what James 4 verse 1 says.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Great question. Is it not this? That your passions are at war within you. You desire and do not have, so you murder.

[7 : 32] You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and you quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and you do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your own passions. Now, having a desire doesn't make us bad people. Having desires and needs and wants in life, that's not a bad thing. The problem is, is what we do when we don't get what we want, right? You know, everyone always tries. I'm assuming the nice approach first, like, hey, I asked and I even said please. But when then that doesn't work, what do we resort to, right? We resort to fighting and quarreling to get what we want. We enforce our will to win our ways. And that happens in two ways. We use might or we use manipulation. That's what we do, okay? Might. We threaten with aggression. We try to make the other person scared to make them submit to our will. And that's not just hitting. That's not just physical abuse. We can hit with our words.

We can hit with words that wound the soul. And women can do that just as good as men, okay? And that's, we can do that in various ways. It's either belittling or talking down or name-calling or whatever those things. And that rips at our souls. And it makes us smaller people than we should be. But there's also this sense of, like, constant criticism. Like, constantly feeling like you're putting the other person under the microscope, nitpicking at every little thing they do so that they start to feel like, oh my gosh, I'm worthless. I can't do anything right. And it's a way of making people give into your will and make it stop. And can I just be honest? I'm a pastor and I counsel a lot of marriages. I see this way too much in Christian marriages, where the guy and the husband is like, hey, I never hit her, never physically abused her. And I don't get it. Words aren't the same thing.

It's no big deal, except that the Bible says they are, okay? The Bible likens words to swords and clubs, okay? The most common instrument of abuse in Christian marriages isn't fists, it's words.

It's our tongues. We got to own up to that. And you might be in, you might be here right now thinking like, yeah, I need to repent. Good. You need to repent. There'll be time to do that after the service.

And husband, if you've been berating your wife, if you've been talking her down, if you've been nitpicking and criticizing her, you need to repent. You need to turn from doing that. Use your words to build her up and not tear her down. Wives, the same thing. It goes for you too.

[10 : 13] Boy, this is fun, isn't it? So there's might, but then there's manipulation, right? Manipulation isn't exclusive to women, right? We all kind of do it. Manipulation can be playing the victim in order to get what we want, trying to get our way through pity or manipulating. If you do this, then I know you'll love me. If you do this, then, okay, these things are going to be great. But it could also be manipulating through withholding. You can give the silent treatment, withhold physical intimacy. So whether it's minor manipulation, the goal in both of those things is getting what I want. We do that to get what I want. And it's imposing your will on the other person. We try to force our spouse into submission like a UFC opponent. It doesn't take Nostradamus to predict this isn't going to produce a loving, flourishing marriage. It builds distance. It fosters resentment and bitterness and jealousy.

It drives a wedge. Those things drive a wedge. And it doesn't happen in a moment. It just, it slowly drives a wedge more and more and more. And here's the thing. Ooh, you may win the moment, but guess what? You could end up losing the relationship. Which is better?

So, okay. God says if we don't get what we ask for, we don't get to take it through might or manipulation. But then is there another option? What is our option then? What chance do we have to win people over? Maybe some of the things I want to do in my desires are actually really good godly things. How am I just supposed to lay them down and give up and say, oh, well, I'm just going to suffer for the rest of my life. I have no other options for happiness. But the gospel, again, it gives us another way. When we can't win people over through our words, we can win them over through the witness of our life. A submitted life can be more persuasive than a wise word.

Now, before we take this the wrong way, the motive that Peter is getting at here isn't you winning your husband to get your way like, hey, I really want a new car. Maybe if I just dazzle him enough and do enough chores and cook him the right meals or whatever it may be, I'm keeping it PG on purpose, he'll get me what I want. But then that's kind of its own form of manipulation. That's not really what we're getting at submission-wise. It's a motive. The motive isn't winning your husband to get what you want. It's the motive is winning your husband to God's way. That's what Peter's talking about here. Your husbands could be won over. The hope for a good marriage for all of us isn't getting the stuff we want. The hope for a good marriage is making God the center of it.

It's both people saying, man, God is the most important thing here. The hope is what is meant to be the primary drive for both a husband and the wife.

[13 : 14] And husbands, we're going to get to you next. Trust me, your time's coming. I'm going to address you. But first, we are talking to the wives in these verses. And here's a little tip for you guys in the room. Resist the impulse to say amen, okay? It's not going to go well for you if you do that.

Again, what is he saying? He's saying that even if some do not obey, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct. And here's some hope for you ladies. Do you have husbands whose ears seem to be clogged sometimes or all the times? Even the guys are saying, yeah, yeah, that's me. That doesn't mean you shout louder so we could hear, right? And your best hope for your husband, your best hope to win him over is that, again, that he believes and obeys the gospel. And if that's not happening, you still have that hope that he's going to be able to see that working out. And you could put that on display through his eyes, right? The gospel can get into people's hearts through their eyes, not just their ears.

Your life is a living witness to the power of the gospel when you live by it. And this passage isn't saying wives need to be silent and submissive so that they're just running around to their husband's beck and call. And it's saying that if your gospel proclamation isn't working, you still have the hope of gospel demonstration. And let me say this, even us Christian husbands, right, who believe we need our wives, we need you wives to do this for us as well.

We need your help. We need your proclamation and demonstration because it builds us up. It builds up our faith and encourages us. Man, I love when my wife comes and she can challenge me and she could say, hey, Jess, we need to step it up in this area, whether that be prayer or caring for the kids or discipling them, right? We need that because we can be pigheaded. We can be a little bit difficult.

We can be a little bit ornery and hardheaded, right? And sometimes, man, we need that gospel demonstration to wake us up. And if that's true for Christian husbands, if we need that, how much more for husbands who aren't? And this is a high calling, ladies. This is an amazing call.

[15 : 23] If you're in a marriage where the spouse isn't a believer, you even have more incentive to demonstrate the gospel. You live on the front lines of mission. And this takes patience and it takes trust in God. Sometimes guys learn better through their eyes, right? Okay, most of the time, guys learn better through their eyes. We need as much help as we can get to get stuff through our heads at times.

We need visual aids. Now, all this talk about demonstration can lead us to a path that I wouldn't, I would say, man, we need to avoid. It could lead us to an emphasis on our external behaviors.

And actually, Peter isn't saying that. The most important thing isn't what you are doing. Rather, it's who you are becoming, okay? This is true for wives. It's also true for everyone in the room.

Submission begins in the heart before it works itself out in the marriage. See, before there can be gospel demonstration, there has to be inward gospel transformation. So Peter launches into it in verse three. Don't let your adorning be external, the braiding of your hair, 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 precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands. So what this verse isn't saying is that external adornment is bad, right? Like holiness for women isn't the equivalent of entering an ugly contest. That's not what Peter's getting at here, okay? So I grew up in an interesting era in Christianity where this verse was used to shame women for using makeup or dressing in contemporary fashion or dyeing their hair. No joke. I heard it all. God is okay with a hairstyle differently to a tightly worn bun on the head. You don't have to live that way. Ladies, you are free from bondage, okay?

God is okay with external beauty, right? In the Bible, Sarah was a stunning woman, right? She had looks men would kill for apparently. And on a few occasions, Abraham was like so scared of that that he asked Sarah to like lie about their relationship. Beauty isn't bad, but here's the thing. Putting your hope in it is. If your value as a woman is tied up in beauty, man, that is bondage. Husbands, we can fight for our wives here, okay? I want to say this to you guys in the room. Your wife is your standard of beauty, okay? That's where you get your standard of beauty. It's not for magazines. It's not from TV. It's not from movies. It's not from models. Your wife is your standard of beauty. The point here, ladies, is don't put your hope on what can be seen. Almost everything that we behold with our eyes is a fading glory.

[18:27] It's all going to pass away at some point. So don't build your hope on those things. I just want to take an aside for the singles in the room here. Something important. When you think, if you think God is calling you out of singleness into marriage, three important things to consider, three C's, right? Character calling chemistry. Those are important things. Oftentimes, what we're trained up to do is put all our hope in chemistry. I'm attracted to this person. I think they're cute.

I like them. We should get married, live happily ever after. We don't think that character matters. We don't think that calling is really important, right? I mean, think about when you, when, if you're a single person, man, if you're really thinking and feel like God's calling you to marriage, man, take some time to get to know some, the person you're interested in. Are they a person of character?

And you know what? It's, it's easy to tell if someone's cute. It takes some time for a person to prove their character. Only fools rush in, right? There's a good reason for that.

Character takes time to be proven. It takes time. Somebody can lie and hide what's really going on inside their hearts and they can fool you. Calling is important. Do you guys share the same core values about your faith, about what kind of family you want, about your careers, even where you're going to live?

Those are important things because they're things that really cause opposition in the marriage. And then, of course, there's chemistry. I'm not downplaying chemistry. Think about this, man, can we be good friends? Do we get along? Is there a possibility for good companionship here? And then attraction. I'm not downplaying attraction. Attraction is important to you.

[20 : 15] This is something to think about for the singles, okay? So whether you're married or thinking about getting married, we tend to put all our eggs in this attraction basket. But before marriage, we think this lust that we mistake for love is going to conquer all the obstacles, but lust is shallow.

Character, calling, chemistry, those things run deep. And God points that out. Ladies, you are way more valuable than your body. The most exquisitely wonderful part of you is what is happening on the inside of you.

That is what the scripture is getting at. The beauty on the outside fades. Look, I'm not a beautiful person, but I used to look a lot better than this. Age caught up to me. Can't beat it, right? Age catches up to everyone. That's the point. You can't beat it. And those who try to beat it, like Joan Rivers, right?

They end up looking like Joan Rivers. But there is a beauty that doesn't fade, guys. That's where we should be spending our time.

Not two hours of primping and pruning and pulling and painting to get ready for a day. Man, spend time with the one who adorns your soul, who adorns your inner person with an unfading beauty.

[21 : 30] Give time to that. Foster that relationship. And this is so different to the way our cultural moment says to get your way. It's either, man, use your beauty to make men beg so that you can get what you want, or wear them down with your words through arguments and criticism and all those things.

But neither way leads to winning people over. It's just, again, it's just winning the moment. The better way is the gentle and quiet spirit. Now, you might get the impression, again, that this is actual weakness.

But, man, the problem is today's understanding of power doesn't allow room for gentleness, and it doesn't allow room for meekness. We all know the saying, nice guys finish last, right?

Right? If you want something, you've got to do whatever it takes to get it. That's what we're told all the time. But this is the antithesis of the gospel. The gospel doesn't start with you taking it for yourself.

Man, it's established on you receiving something in grace. Undeservedly. So God's way, when we look at it, it starts with receiving grace, submission to him, submission to his will.

[22 : 41] It continues in God's way. We still receive grace every single day, moment by moment, submission to him. Now, again, it's not bad to have desires and want things, but the Christian doesn't bully and manipulate to get them.

It's true for everybody. Life-giving, meaningful relationships are based in a mutual giving and receiving for the benefit of the other person.

This flows from a heart endorned with gentleness and peace. And God says, man, that is precious. That is precious in God's sight. Now, it could be precious, but that doesn't mean it's easy.

We might be hearing this and thinking, man, this is an impossible way to live. I mean, that is a high bar. That is a high standard, but it has been done before. And we're not without examples.

And here, Peter actually points to the life of Sarah. Sarah's life points to submission fueled by faith in God. What we see from it is that submission is a free choice.

[23 : 43] It's not an imposed thing upon you. It's a free choice fueled by faith in God. Verse 6, it says, As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, and you are her children.

If you do good and do not fear anything, that is frightening. So Sarah, we see in the story, Sarah is the wife of Abraham, the father of our faith. And Abraham was living toward the promises of God, right?

That meant he left his home country. He left his hometown. He left his family behind to live as a sojourner and a pilgrim in a foreign land. That God said, I'm going to take you there so you could see it, but you're not going to possess it.

Your children will possess it, but not you. But Abraham didn't go by himself. You know what? Sarah went with him. And it's not because he dragged her kicking and screaming the whole way.

Not at all. Sarah also had her own faith in God's promises. Abraham didn't make her go. She had the freedom to choose not to go. But she went. Their journeys brought them into dangerous moments, incredible miracles, and patient enduring.

[24 : 47] But they did it together. And Abraham had Sarah next to him the whole time. And what held her there wasn't this, like, cheap codependence of an insecure woman.

Okay? It wasn't because she was an oppressed woman who slavishly followed her husband around. And she had her own faith. She was firmly fixed in God's calling because she possessed her own faith.

And by the end of her life, she had walked a long journey of faith with her husband. And it was here that we see Sarah calling Abraham Lord. Okay, guys?

Dream on if you think your wife's going to do that for you, all right? But this is what happens. So they're there. They get a visitation from God.

And God says, by this time next year, Sarah is going to have a son. She hears this. And it says about Sarah, she was old and advanced in years, and the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.

[25 : 43] I'm sure I don't have to explain that part, right? So Sarah laughed to herself. All right? So she's laughing. And this is a painful, mocking, disbelief laughter.

This isn't like, oh, that was a really good joke. She's saying, she's laughing and saying, oh, really? Now that I'm worn out? Now that I'm older and my Lord is old? Shall I have pleasure?

See, Sarah was near the end of a long life of trusting and waiting for God's promises. But they didn't have the most important thing to show for it. For all the sacrifice, for all the danger, for all the hardships they experienced.

They didn't have a son yet. So she calls Abraham Lord, but it's when she's laughing to herself and calling him old at the same time, right? Her fear in that moment caused her to laugh.

Really, now? Now I'm going to have a child? But even though she didn't handle that moment perfectly, what we do learn is that she overcame her fear with faith.

[26 : 50] Hebrews 11.11 says this about Sarah, By faith, Sarah herself received power to conceive a child, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

And that's the big point here. Not that she called Abraham Lord. The big point here is this. The call to submission to any husband isn't easy. At times, there will be fear.

At times, it's going to be hard. But you know what? You don't give into the fear. You fight fear with faith, right? Submission comes by having this faith-fueled submission to God and faith in him.

And she laughed. She had a little bit of disbelief that she could conceive, but she didn't stay there. She put her eyes back on God.

She trusted in his faithfulness instead of giving into fear. And that is how a life of submission is lived. It's not weak. Okay. Husbands, now it's our turn. All right.

[27 : 53] Verse 7. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the women as the weaker vessel. We'll get into that. I'll explain that.

I know what you're all thinking. Since they are heirs with you of the grace of life. Actually, since, yeah, they are heirs with you in the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

So, what is this weaker vessel stuff, right? Peter obviously didn't know Ronda Rousey. So, let me just say this.

He's not implying that women are less competent than men, or that women have less value than men, or that women are less capable than men.

That's not what he's getting at here. Context is important. In the day that Peter wrote this, men had a physical and social advantage. They had the physical power and the social power, and they used it to mistreat women quite often.

[28 : 56] If you were a woman in that context, man, you were in a place of weakness and vulnerability. The way the Roman society was set up, that's how it worked out. But Peter is telling men, he's telling Christian men, I don't care how the world does it.

We don't live that way. We don't take advantage of positions of power. We don't bend them to our wills and our wants to get our way. True masculinity doesn't dominate the weak.

It doesn't take advantage of the weak. It builds up and it empowers. That's what biblical masculinity is. That's what gospel masculinity does.

Just look to Jesus. He didn't come as the king of the universe, which he was, to lord it over us and to dominate us into submission. What did he come?

He came to suffer and serve. He laid down his life for us, the poor and the powerless. He built his power to be a blessing.

[30 : 02] And he calls us to be like him, men. He says, honor your wives. Why? Man, they are co-heirs of this grace that you have found in Jesus Christ.

Co-heirs. Not less than. Co-heirs. At the cross, we are equal value. We are equal before God.

And this was a radical change. This was a radically different view than that day and age. Women were less valued than men. And the gospel message was, no, that is not true.

Women are just as valuable as men. So, we don't get to perform by the society's expectation of what men get to do.

We don't get to perform by the sinful desires to dominate and take what we want through power. God says, no, men in my kingdom, you don't get to act that way.

[31 : 08] You don't get to stand back and treat your wife like she's your servant, ordering her around to get whatever you want. That phrase, live in an understanding way.

What does that mean? Well, it's not yelling at her and rolling her eyes because she gets upset. That's not what that means. Thinking, why does she gotta be so emotional? The problem isn't that she's emotional.

The problem is you're just a jerk, right? What God is saying, what God is saying here, he's saying to us husbands, get to know your wife. Get to know your wife.

You know what? I didn't make her like you on purpose. I don't need two of you. Get to know her. What are her likes? What are her fears? What are her loves?

What are her dreams? What makes her fears feel special? What makes her feel cherished? What makes her feel valued? Why is she unique in her own way? Get to know those things.

[32 : 05] And with that knowledge, guys, comes great responsibility. Knowledge can be dangerous in the wrong hands. But husbands, we don't use knowledge to shame. We don't use knowledge to judge.

Man, God says we get to know our wives and we get to show them honor. So it's like the more that I learn about Haley, the more I am called to honor her for the things I know about her.

And actually, when I know her, her value doesn't shrink in my eyes. Her value is, oh my goodness, she is amazing. She is a wonderful woman. She is a godly woman. She is an amazing mom.

Man, the things that she sees and the way God is working into her life and the ways that God can speak into my life through my wife is an amazing thing. And it's this huge gift to me.

In our honoring, when we learn about our wives, man, we put them first. We honor our wives.

[33 : 02] We put them first before ourselves. We value how God's made them. They are our standard of beauty. We protect them. We pray for them. We provide for them. We listen to them to understand who they are.

And guys, make no mistake, God takes this very seriously. The way we treat our wives not only affects our relationships with them, it also affects our fellowship with God.

Right? I mean, God is saying here, you can't expect me to hear your prayers if you treat your wife poorly. That's brutal. God's given it to us honest.

Another passage says that without love, without acting in love, it's like our prayers and our praise are like this irritating gong to God.

It's just noise to him. He's not hearing them. The prophet Malachi tells Israel to stop bringing their sacrifices to the temple. He's like, I'm not interested in your worship.

[34 : 03] I don't want to hear your worship. And they're like, well, why? What have we done wrong? And he goes, the way you're treating your wives. This is serious stuff, guys.

Men, husbands, is your wife flourishing or fading under your leadership? And if she's fading, how is Jesus calling you to change? You need to surrender your will.

You surrender your will to God's will. The best example to look for husbands isn't Sarah, it's Jesus. Ephesians 5, 25 to 27.

Husbands, love your wives. How? As Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. He gave himself up for her. He laid down his life.

Why? That he might sanctify her, that he might make her even more beautiful, 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.

[35 : 10] Husbands, our calling isn't domineering leadership. I'm the man, so you better submit. That's not what God's calling us to. I want to say, man, if you got to pull that card, you're just a bad leader.

If you got to tell your wife, you better submit. Something's gone wrong. And leadership, the leadership God's calling us to is to lay down our lives for our wives.

That means sacrificing, that could mean, sacrificing guys night for date night. That could mean shutting off the TV or the phone or the video games to spend time learning your wife.

That might mean scaling back on your hobby time to get more wifey time. Okay? And it's more than just to have peace in the home. It's about a marriage that glorifies God and points to Jesus' love for the church.

Your marriage should put the gospel on display. We're going to end with this. We want people who aren't Christians to look at our marriages and say, man, you know what? We want that.

[36 : 17] That is different. That is unique. That looks amazing. Tell us more. Tell us what's going on. Open doors for the gospel. Remember what 1 Peter 2.12 says. Man, why do we want to be changed?

Why do we want to have honorable conduct? It's so that people could see our good works and glorify God. Everything that we talked about today, wives, husbands, everything that we talked about, man, that's what it's about.

It's so that people could see our conduct and be like, oh my gosh, there is something different about these guys. This is crazy. They're getting along so well. And it's a marriage that, it's not perfect, right?

But there's not this constant fighting. We're not fighting against each other all the time. Man, we spend more time fighting for each other. We don't live to win. We live in submission to the other and love and humility and honor.

and that submission isn't imposed. It's freely given and freely received. It's a life of sacrifice that points to the greater sacrifice of Jesus for us.

[37 : 25] Man, if you're here and you're a Christian, how do we respond? Marriage, man, I hope you've heard that marriage is important to God. Man, we have been given a high view of marriage.

You know, the Bible starts and ends with the marriage. The final marriage is this picture of Jesus coming for his bride, the church, so that we could be with him forever and ever and ever.

And this Savior, Jesus, came to us by dying for us, not to dominate, but by dying for us. He won the war we could never win.

We had a war, a battle against sin and death. We were never going to win that victory. Jesus won it for us. And through the cross, we are forgiven.

Through the cross, you are forgiven. You are set free and called to believe in him. I'm calling you today to surrender your will to him.

[38 : 24] Put your faith in him and trust in him. If you're a Christian, the gospel is our hope for marriage. It's the hope for our marriages.

If you're here and your marriage isn't in a great spot, the gospel is the hope for healing for your marriage. And it doesn't start with external things and let me just start doing and making these changes.

Man, it starts with a heart being transformed. God getting in there and bringing healing. Stop fighting to win.

Surrender. Man, when we understand grace, it's so easy to surrender our wills to God's will. We submit to him first.

And when we can submit to God and we can submit to his will, man, it makes it so easy to submit to one another. And for some of us, before we come and we continue by taking communion, we need to repent.

[39 : 25] We need to repent to our spouse. It's a good time to do that. And if that's you, man, take that time to do that. Maybe as you're taking communion, you can repent to one another and just be reminded that, man, Jesus is, his body and his blood.

His body was broken. His blood was shed for the sins you've committed against one another. And those sins aren't unforgivable sins. Those sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ.

And because we know that they're forgiven in Jesus Christ and we can't hold them against one another and they can't be held against us and so we could repent and we could also and offer forgiveness.

Let's pray. Lord God, I thank you that our best hope, our best hope for anything we do is in you and looking to you. Our best hope, Lord, is submitting to your ways and your ways are good.

They're not easy ways. They don't come natural to us but you, Holy Spirit, are working those things out in us and we thank you for that. We thank you that our instinct is to fight to win but then you come in and you invade us and you say, no, no, I'm gonna change this.

[40 : 44] I'm gonna conform your will. I'm gonna change your heart. So that stops being its primary desire and motive and you change us to be people who can be humble and live in humble submission even to one another in marriage.

And so I pray for the people in this room that are married that, Lord God, this would sink into our hearts, that we would live this out, this hope of marriage. And Lord, our marriages can be this amazing display of your truth and the gospel.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.