

# Wife, Respect Your Husband

## Series: 5 Words --- Week 7

Ephesians 5:18-33

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- October 3, 2021

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### Video with Christopher and Danielle Anderson

**Christopher:** My name is Christopher Anderson. This is my wife Danielle. We've been married for seventeen years and have three amazing daughters, eight, five, and two.

I think one of the biggest ways that I feel Danielle's love and respect is how she talks about me. And I know that whenever Danielle is talking about me to other people, it's with love and respect. In fact, it happened just this last week. One of her friends was just offhandedly saying, "Hey, Danielle was talking about you with a group of women and she was just going on about how great you were." And just that solidity of knowing where I stand with my wife ... and we've just kind of made it part of our love towards each other. You're not going to hear us badmouthing each other to other people. I sleep well at night knowing that when I'm the topic of conversation, it's in a good light. And vice versa—the way I talk about her to other people, you're going to walk away thinking that she's the amazing person that she is.

**Danielle:** Thanks. But of course, this had to be learned. I am one hundred percent extrovert, and I love to make somebody laugh. And so, early on in marriage—you know, we've had seventeen years to mess up and do it better—and so many more to come—but I had to learn early on that if it's a laugh at his expense, then that's not communicating my heart, my feelings. And our personalities are very different, and learning how to love and respect from where he's coming from or where I'm coming from ... And we even have this: if we're going into hanging out with friends or something, I'll say, "Hey, that one thing that was so funny that happened this week that just made me laugh and laugh—is that a topic that we can bring up with our friends?" *Can I make fun of you tonight?* is basically how that goes. And we basically know that such love ... sometimes we have tender places and a tender heart, like, "But no, you're making fun of me. I can handle so-and-so, but not you."

**Christopher:** One of the lessons we've learned over the years is how much our words matter to the other person. I can think back on a number of situations where I was struggling with something really hard, maybe at work, or relationally with another person, or just in my head, or struggling with whatever; and Danielle has had a word of encouragement that gave me the confidence or just cut me off from a path of making bad choices or blowing something up that

didn't need to blow up, because she had a timely word of encouragement or a reminder of who I am.

**Danielle:** Yeah, they kind of said in our premarital counseling that one of the great things about our relationship was that Christopher really thought that he was marrying up and I really thought I was marrying up. And we really, genuinely are on the same team and are wanting what's best for the other person. Like, I want Christopher to thrive and to fully succeed at all of life. And it's the reversal of that—it's a big deal.

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Let's give those guys a hand. Thank you.

Well, good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us, wherever you are. This is our last week in the *5 Words* series and I want to start by thanking everybody involved, or at least as many as I can mention right now. Our design team—it's our youth ministry in many respects—Kevin and Sarah do a lot of our design and things of good taste, so they did these and the mug stickers. Angela works in our production department and we had to run off these notebooks—two sets, because apparently, they were very popular. And then Kris Linenberger and David have been working to do the study questions and the small groups together. These days everyone's kind of working with everyone, and I just want to thank the staff for doing such a great job on our *5 Words* series. So, thank you ... [applause]

### **Introduction: How Bad Is Your Marriage?**

Here's a great question: how bad is your marriage? Is it this bad, December 19, 1990-something—I can't read it—it was before COVID. So, here's the story. So, I was meeting with this couple—I only met with them twice. They were the classic "opposites attract" couple, and by that, I mean that he was no shorter than 6'6" and no lighter than 290 pounds. She in heels was maybe five feet and not heavy enough to even donate blood. So, they come in and they're having some serious problems. And they were short meetings, because—at least he was honest. He just said, "I don't want to change, everything's just fine the way it is, and I'm only here because she's worn me down."

And I said, "Okay. Great. There's nothing anybody can do about this."

Then she comes in and says, "Wait a minute. I just want three things to be different."

I said, “No. Nothing can be done. No one can do anything here until you’re both willing to change.” So, there’s that.

They came back—I don’t know—two months later. It was Groundhog Day but it was a lot shorter. He comes in and sits down.

“Do you want to change?”

“No.”

I said, “There’s nothing anybody can do. But if you’re willing to change, the sky’s the limit.”

A couple of months after that, something happened where he ended up putting her in the hospital. So, she filed for divorce. And for some reason, she wanted to deliver those papers. So, we talked about how to do that. So, here it is, December 23, 1990-whatever, I’m doing some early Christmas shopping, I’m at Academy when she calls.

And so, she said, “I’m doing it now.”

I said, “So, he’s not home, right?”

She said, “He’s not home.”

“And you’re not driving, someone else is driving?”

“Right.”

“Look, you keep this phone on and you talk me through the whole plan that we talked about. Do not hang up the phone and do not stop talking.”

She said, “Okay. So, we’re driving down the block. Okay, I’m pulling up out front. Okay, I’m opening the door. I’m leaving the car door open. I’m going into the house. I’m leaving the front door open.”

I said, “Just put the papers on the table and go!”

She said, “I’m putting the papers on the table.” And then, like boom! Just kidding—it’s not the movies. She ran out of the house, she jumped into the car, kind of drove away, she cried, the driver cried, I cried. We prayed. Now at this time I’m just kind of sitting in an aisle somewhere in Academy, it was so tense.

And I just said, “I am so sorry.”

And she said, “And I still love him.”

And I said, “I know you do.”

That's a bad marriage. And four years later I was at some sort of social gathering and there they were again together—completely different. He was a gentle, happy giant now, and she had a twinkle in her eye that I'd never seen, and I'd known her for a while.

And he said this: "Those divorce papers just rattled me. I realized that I was going to lose the only good thing that's ever happened to me. And so, we went to counseling and we've been in counseling ever since."

So, I said to him, "Divorce papers—the ultimate Christmas gift!" I shouldn't have said that—*That's the ultimate Christmas gift!*

But I was looking at her and I said, "There's more to this story, right? I can tell you're chomping at the bit."

She said, "Yeah. We moved, we started going to this other church, and then we've started a marriage ministry. We are the marriage advisors at our church."

I said, "The sky's the limit!"

She said, "Heaven's the limit!"

That's what happens when two people work the plan.

### **Grace Covenant's Philosophy of Ministry**

A number of years ago, Grace Covenant Church realized that the crying, felt need and the real need for our culture was deep, intimate relationships—being deeply connected to other human souls. It is the nature of the way we were made--in friendships, in marriage, in family. And we realized that that's what people are longing for, and if the Gospel is not affecting your relationship, you either, one, do not know the Gospel, or two, you are not doing the Gospel—you're not practicing it.

And so, around here at Grace we started using phrases, bringing relationship into it, because that's how it works. So, we said "relational evangelism," "relational discipleship." We have "relational missions." We have "relational apologetics." All things relational, because that's the cry. And this is the answer to that cry—relational depth. And that's how we ended up with the *5 Words* series, in many respects, because we find out in the *5 Words* that through singleness and through marriage, those are two of the primary means of discipleship, of becoming like Christ in all of life.



## **The Five Words: Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect**

So, here are the five words. Why don't we say them out loud together? Ready? Let's go. Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect. This is a great day, a super great day as today we look at all five words together in a passage. And we're going to show how contextually, they fit together, and how they work together in harmony. It's Ephesians chapter 5, and we're going to start at verse 18 and go to the end of the chapter, verse 33. But I want you to see how they're all connected.

### **Ephesians 5:18-21**

**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

Chapter 5, verse 18 of the Book of Ephesians. He says, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all of your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

So, it starts with being filled with the Holy Spirit and submitting to one another. And now he's going to talk about marriage. He'll start with wives, and then he'll go to husbands.

### **Ephesians 5:22-24**

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.**

“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.”

### **Ephesians 5:25-28**

**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy, <sup>26</sup> cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to Himself as a radiant church: without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.**

Now to the husbands: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, all this to present her to Himself as a radiant church: without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”

There’s the blueprint. This is the architectural plan for marriage. And in the next three sentences he’s going to summarize all of that, using all five words and making it all work.

## **Ephesians 5:31-33**

**“For this reason a man will break from his father and mother and bond to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.<sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**

Watch this, verses 31 through 33: “ ‘For this reason a man will break with his father and his mother and bond to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery, and I am saying this as 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.”

Break, Bond, One, Love, Respect. There it is. It’s a blueprint for marriage. We’ve been saying this all along. It’s not a road, it’s a destination. This is how it’s supposed to work. God designed marriage with a purpose. There’s a plan. We just need to follow the plan. He designed it for a purpose.

If you’ll look at this passage, you’ll see there’s three major sections. There’s a foundation section, there’s the wall section, there’s the ceiling or roof section. Three major parts on this section here. And I want you to see, the first part, the foundation part, is to be drunk on the Holy Spirit. The second part is going to be, in that, submit to one another. And the third part is going to say, *Just play your role. Everybody has a part—just play your part.* Just do the plan, you know? And then, heaven’s the limit. Heaven’s the limit.

### **Be Drunk On the Holy Spirit**

Let’s talk about that first one—be drunk on the Holy Spirit. So, last week if you were here, I mentioned that you must be yielded to, or you must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. I said that at the end of the sermon. You can listen to that. The Lord’s will be done. I said that because it’s true. But the reason I also said it is, grammatically, this sentence is one thought. And it all starts in the sentence in verse 18, and it continues through. In verse 18, he says, “Be filled with the Spirit.” And then suddenly, the next thing you know, he’s talking about wives should submit to their husbands, and then husbands, and then later on, even children. So, why isn’t there

a transition? Why isn't there a stop and then say *Okay, I'm moving on to something else?* Because he's not moving on to something else. He's not changing the subject. It's one thought—"Be filled with the Spirit, submitting to one another ..." – and on and on and on.

It's funny, he says, "Do not get drunk with wine, because that's debauchery." Right? And he's not saying that so you won't get drunk with wine—he's going to say that in other places. No, no, the point of him saying that is that he's doing good communications. He's going to help you understand something you don't know with something that you do know.

What do you know? You've got a drunk uncle, right? Everybody's got one of those, right? So, you know what drunk with wine looks like. And so, later on—we don't know what it means to be filled with the Spirit—it's hard for us to visualize that—he says, *Let's do this*. What happens when you get drunk with wine? Well, you turn your will over to the wine, and the next thing you know, you're doing stuff that you wouldn't be doing otherwise. *Hey, let's go to a karaoke bar. I feel like I should sing right now. Here, hold my wine. You're going to love this. I'm going to sound great!*

And Paul says, *Okay, you got that? Great. It's like that, but nothing like that. You surrender your will to the Holy Spirit—do not be drunk with wine—that's debauchery—but be filled with the Holy Spirit, because when you do, you're going to do stuff that you normally wouldn't do*. You're off singing again. It says, "... singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." When you're drunk with the Spirit and surrendered to His will, you're going to give out unconditional love. Your pride dies. You overflow with grace.

*That's not like you.*

*I know. I know, I'm kind of acting out a little bit here.*

That's what he's saying to do.

## **Mutual Submission**

So, that's part one. And he just rolls into part two. While you're drunk with the Holy Spirit, he says in verse 21, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Everyone's submitting to one another. And the rest of the section is about different people and the way they express that.

Submit is a big word for Paul. He uses it twenty-three times in his writing. Actually, it's a very big thing in the Bible. And usually it's for two reasons. One, because that's how harmony takes place. But also, there's positional submission. So, sometimes he'll appeal to a position. But submission is a very important part of the Bible. From beginning to end, where the original rebellion was lack of submission, Augustine described sin in a single word: independence. *Yeah. I don't submit to anyone.* There you go, Adam. And then the Bible ends with submission: "Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess ..."

### **Roles in a Marriage**

In the context of positional submission, the Bible clearly says we are to submit to civil authorities, church authorities, parental authorities, our bosses. And then in this place, it brings it into the marriage itself. In this passage it says that there are roles in marriage. There's a husband's role and a wife's role, and I know, a lot of you are thinking, *But aren't there exceptions?* Well, yeah, in certain circumstances. But the exception actually proves the rule. What about the abuse of power? Yeah, but the abuse of power doesn't negate the principle. It doesn't undo the plan. It means that the guy who built it did it wrong. But the plan is still there.

#### **Ephesians 5:22-23**

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> 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.**

So, while you're living in this context of being surrendered to the Holy Spirit, while everybody's trying to out-submit to one another, the role of the wife is clearly declared in these two verses where it says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior." That's the architectural design. That's the way the plan works. You've got to follow the plan. The wife's job is to acknowledge that there's a need for love and respect towards the husband as he is the head. It's not because the husband earns that respect and submission. (It sure helps, guys. It *really* helps if you're respectable!) But the point is that it's the architect's plan regardless.

If you look at this section, it's beautiful. It has two main parts about how this architectural plan finds itself out. It shows declaratively that there are gender differences, and God takes those gender differences seriously. And the second part is that there's tremendous freedom in the context of the overarching principle. In other words, this is a brilliant statement of how to do marriage, because you have this one basic, simple principle. And then you have tremendous flexibility with almost infinite expressions of the principle.

## 1. The Principle of Headship

Let me explain the two principles. The first one is headship. The husband is the head of the marriage. It says the husband is the head of the marriage—it just says that. And what that means is, fundamentally, he has the final say. He's the one that leads.

Paul is saying here, and it's throughout the Bible, there are gender differences. And when we grasp those gender differences and we enjoy the role that we're supposed to play, we enjoy life. In the end, the husband is the leader. If there are disagreements and there's conflict, he gets the final say.

An example would be: if you're dancing, someone has to lead. And God says that according to the design, the man should lead.

And you can respond, *But he can't dance without hurting me.* Yep. But he still leads.

*But I'm smarter and better.* That's true too. I think everybody agrees with that. That's good.

*He doesn't even want to dance.* Okay, just stand there. Let him lead. It'll get weird for him, and maybe then he'll start leading. I don't know ... based on a true story ... okay. [laughter from congregation]

So, right now some of you are thinking, But what about this, what about that? So, Paul is getting ahead of that. Like, what about the abuses? So, Paul says, *Look*, "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. He died for her and gave himself up for her." So, while the wife is submitting, the husband is making his decisions and his choices, not on his own selfish ambitions or his own desires; he's making decisions the way Christ made decisions for His church. He's looking out for her desires, her needs. I've got to figure out how I can help her become everything she was meant to be.

A husband doesn't make choices independently; it's the collective "us", dream of us. We are "us"; there's not a him and her—it's both. And so, in this respectful debate of going back and forth, the husband has ultimate last say. Again, let's pretend we had dance classes together and the man leads. So, it just shows itself in respectable discourse, like the video.

Here's a classic example around our house, maybe. I said, "Hey, I'm thinking of buying another handgun."

And Melinda said, "Uh .... Really? So, don't you already have six or something?"

And I said, "No, because first of all, a shotgun doesn't count as a handgun. And I have four. No, I have five ... okay, I have five."

She said, "It just looks to me that you want to buy another something-something that you're not going to use."

And I said, "Well, I'm trying to protect our house. And I think five handguns is plenty if we lived in a small enough apartment. But we live in a house that has 2020 square feet, and I've got to keep it safe, and we have some vulnerable places, and I'm just trying to help."

And she says to me, "I know that you're going to be there to protect us for that big home invasion that's coming. I just can't remember that ever happening in our neighborhood---ever---or even our zip code, maybe our area code. But, you know what?" Here's what she does. She says, "Let's just think about it for a while, and why don't you pray about it, and I'll pray about it, and we'll see what happens."

I'm like, *Oh, no! She's brought in God on her side!*

So, that's a respectful discourse after thirty-five years. You know, the early years there were fireworks, and now it's like she's just playing a Siamese cat—*Let him just ... he'll figure it out.*

Headship means this: the man has final say, and the man is looking out for her best interests and the family's best interests. But at the end of the day, he has the final call. And contextually in our marriage, I probably have only said, *You have to trust me on this*, three times that I can think of. One was when Melinda was in a relationship with a woman that I just felt was not good. And I didn't even put my foot down. I just said, *I think you should seriously consider not being involved with this person. She's not good for you, and you're not making any difference in her life. Please consider it again.* We talked about it multiple times.

The other two times were when we were pulling the trigger on buying a house. We bought two houses and she was like, “Eaaah ...”, and I was like, “Thirty years mortgage, let’s go.” And she just had to trust me on both of those.

So, the point is, we don’t do this often where I just say I’m going to be the final decision-maker. We just go back and forth. But at the end of the day, oh yeah. And I’ll answer to God for my decisions. And she’ll answer to God for her submission to that.

The passage is brilliant, I’m telling you. It’s just this principle of gender differences and the roles they play. This is the blueprint—follow the blueprint. *[Matt points to a large sheet of paper on a table on stage—an architectural blueprint.]*

## 2. Principle without Details

But, the second part of the joy of this is that there is very little, if any, details. It’s principles without details. There are almost no cultural details. Like, wives look to husbands to lead.

And a lot of times—well, when my parents had this thing set up, here’s how they did it. I thought our first word was “break.” What difference does that make? I mean, I remember the day we pulled into Melinda’s driveway when we were dating and her mother was mowing the lawn—and she still does. And I thought, *I’m going to marry any woman that lives in that house.* And when we bought our house, I bought Melinda a new lawnmower. I said, “Here’s your lawnmower. This is how y’all do it, right?”

She said, “No, we broke from that.”

Why no details? There are two reasons why there are no details. There are reasons why it doesn’t say that this person does the checkbook, this person goes to work, this person takes care of the kids, this person drives—all that kind of stuff. Why not? One, because God leaves us with tremendous freedoms so that we can show off using our creativity and freedom to honor God. He does that a lot.

This is inside baseball a little bit, but in the context of church government He has these principles. Just do the principles. So, Presbyterians have an interpretation of that, Baptists have another extreme interpretation of that. There are only two kinds of rules; stay within the boundaries of the blueprint.



And then, two, don't get all self-righteous about your view and be condescending to brothers and sisters because they don't hold it. There's freedom here. The same with marriage. Stay within the boundaries of the confines of the principle, but don't go judging other people.

The second reason why there are no details is because this is going to apply over millennia—places and times and cultures. And you can't give too many details on that. The variables are open.

Don't reject the gender differences and the roles they play. This is the blueprint. Now go out and use your freedom to figure out how it's going to work in this marriage.

Let's go back to that whole housing thing. There's a style of home building that's not like a track home or a custom home. There's a semi-custom home where the builder says, *Look, we're going to build this. It's going to be a one-story house and it's going to be 2500 square feet, and this is what you want to do. All the rest is up to you.* And then it's like death by a million choices by picking carpet and whether you're going to have an overhang or a three-car garage, or whatever it might be. But you get to customize the part that they are not going to mess with.

That's what this is. It's a semi-custom home. Here are the parameters. Now go show off. Give God something in your marriage to hang on His refrigerator. You know, like *This is what they did with that. They stayed inside of the principle and they expressed it in a way that very few people have.*

Here's what's weird. Some of you are thinking, *But my husband or my wife is not a believer.* You know what? It works, because it's part of the plan. It's part of this architectural plan. You don't even have to have the plan. I know people that accidentally stumbled into it, usually by making mistakes. *What if we laid the plumbing before we poured the slab? Wow.* Right? And so, you can see people getting the plan right, backing into it because it works.

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# The Surrendered Wife

*"The Surrendered Wife*  
is a practical and valuable tool  
for women wanting to regain  
intimacy in their relationships."

—JOHN GRAY, author  
of *Men Are from Mars, Women*  
*Are from Venus*



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
FINDING INTIMACY, PASSION,  
AND PEACE WITH A MAN

Laura Doyle

There's a best-selling book called *The Surrendered Wife*. Here's what it says. "Overcontrolling wives in the world, unite..." This is from the author. "...behind a white flag. Lay down your arms, curb your tongues, squelch your sarcasm and give your husband plenty of R-E-S-P-E-C-T." Laura Doyle was married to a husband and she is controlling. Four years in, they're in marriage counseling—multiple years of marriage counseling. And then finally, the marriage counselor said, "Laura, let him lead, just for a month—just for one month. Let the guy take the helm."

And she's like, "No." I mean, you don't know controlling like Laura. She had to wear a blindfold when he drove during this month. Yeah. And now she's got this huge study group all around the country. Not because it was for the Lord, not because it was reverence for Christ, but because she accidentally got the blueprint.

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# The Proper Care & Feeding of Husbands

Dr. Laura  
Schlessinger  
*New York Times* Bestselling Author

Laura Schlessinger used to be a popular radio call-in personality—Dr. Laura Schlessinger. And she wrote a book. I love it, it's fun to give out. It's called, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*. I know. Actually, we're that simple. Here's what she writes in the foreword: "Your attitude makes all the difference in the quality of life. Your understanding of men and what they truly need will make all the difference in the quality of your marriage. The truth is that women have all the power in the world to determine the behavior of their men." Then she says, "Let Him Lead."

Not because it's as unto the Lord; not because it's reverence to Christ. Because that's the way we're designed. That's the principle of the roles.

Gabby Reece is a very talented, ambitious, and competitive woman. At Florida State University where she ruled the volleyball court and still has two records of her conquests—she had the most kills (that's a word—kill—that's how dominating she is), and now she's a sports announcer and fashion model and designer and actress. In 1997 she married the man of her dreams, Laird Hamilton. He's a famous big-wave surfer. And he is talented, ambitious, and very competitive. Yeah, you see it coming ... four years in, they file for divorce. Too many ... right?



A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"An exuberant, right-on, and humorous hand-holder  
to confronting the crises and celebrating the victories." —ELLE

# MY FOOT IS TOO BIG FOR THE GLASS SLIPPER

A GUIDE

TO THE

*Less than*

PERFECT LIFE

GABRIELLE REECE

with KAREN KARBO

They're still married, and she writes a book on how to survive life. The book is called *My Foot Is Too Big for the Glass Slipper: A Guide to the Less Than Perfect Life*. And in it are 225 pages of things that work: diet, exercise, parenting. This is what it says on the jacket: "Reece writes that 'to truly be feminine means being soft'"—the woman who leads in kills. " '... to be soft, receptive, and—look out, here it comes—submissive.' She believes women being submissive in relationships is a sign of strength—not weakness."

In an interview with *The Morning Show* in the last few years, she said, "I always want to say that I'm kinder to Laird than to any other person in the world. I really want to love and respect"—those are our words!—"To really love and respect your husband you can show that you admire them, appreciate them, and even desire them on a regular basis." Not because it's unto the Lord; not because it's in reverence to Christ; but because she stumbled upon these two very competitive, strong-willed people who say, *Someone's got to lead*. And she said, *How about you, Laird?* And it's working.

And that's why—listen—that's why you'll see a non-Christian marriage so much better off—because both people are humble and trying to serve each other—than these two Christians over here where—it only takes one—it's proud and stubborn, and *I will not change*. And it doesn't work. Why? Because it's going against the plans. You can't break the plans.

In the way of getting the big picture, I thought I would read to you these paragraphs. It's all one thought. It will start in verse 18, but it's a modern translation. And listen to how it flows and how the harmony works out if you just kind of go with it. Look and listen again for the power of the Holy Spirit. Listen to how there's mutual submission to one another. And then there's these gender roles that come up. Here it is. Let me read it to you in a way that's easier to understand.

**"Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God and chug Him down. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse to sing a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.**

**"Now out of respect for Christ, you should be courteously reverent"—that's submit—"to one another. Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does**

to His church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as He exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.

**“Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything He does and says is designed to bring out the very best in her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how a husband ought to love his wife. They’re really doing themselves a favor—since they’re already ‘one’ in this marriage.”**

Here’s how he’s finishing it up here. **“A man leaves his father and his mother and joins with his wife so that the two become ‘one flesh.’ This is a huge mystery, and I don’t pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. And this provides a good picture of how a husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how a wife is to respect her husband.”** [from *The Message*]

Wow, right? That’s the architectural plan. That’s the design for marriage. That’s the way we were made. That’s our way back into the Garden of Eden.

### Application

So, I hope, in an overall application, if you’re single, I would say this. I hope you can kind of see that you’ve got to get ahead of this. There are so many times you hear, *Wait a minute!* People don’t know. No one told me the purpose of marriage was finding someone so we can help each other become like Christ in all of life. I didn’t know this was all about trying to make me mature and perfect and complete and lacking in nothing. I thought it was going to be kind of fun.

And so, if you’re in a relationship with someone right now, we have a pre-engagement ministry, and there’s none better, frankly. If you’re engaged, there’s a pre-marriage counseling—none better. You should seriously do that so you can understand what you’re getting into.

I’d say this too. Generally speaking—it works for everybody, but you should get drunk on the Holy Spirit. You should be absolutely, completely surrendered to the will of the Spirit and His power in your life. And then only date, associate, with other men and women that are wholly



surrendered to the Holy Spirit. Because this marriage is hard enough, and it truly works when two people enter into a relationship with those parameters and prerequisites.

Married people, let's take a test. We've been at this for six or seven weeks now. Let's take a test. How are you doing on the five words? One to five—one, not so good; five—rock star.

**Break:** say goodbye. A parent's job is to say goodbye. And some of you parents, how are you doing? Say goodbye. And then the child's job is to walk away. How are you walking away, from one to five?

**Bond:** that means unzipping your soul to your mate and saying, *There's stuff inside of me that I think God is going to use you to fix this and surrender this to the Lord.* How are you doing on your willingness to do that?

**One:** one flesh. How are you doing with that? The bigger point of that was that you need to see it as a spiritual, sacred event, that you are praying to experience the soul and the spirit meshing. It is supernatural. Keep praying, keep trying.

**Love:** husbands, it's covenant love, it is *agape*, sacrificial love, and it has power. It has power! Your wife should be almost unrecognizable to someone who hasn't seen her in ten years. If someone meets your wife and hasn't seen her in ten years, they should say, "What has happened to you?" "Well, the power of covenant, unconditional love has altered me. I married a godly man." How are you doing with that, guys? One to five ...

And then **Respect:** gratefully letting him lead. Maybe love and respect are like learning each other's love languages. It's a book we recommend in our study guide. Learn what the other language is and try and speak that and learn how to do that fluently. It's not easy, but I don't know what else you're doing for the rest of your life. This has been an adventure for us for thirty-six or so years.

If you need special help, I would suggest going to two tables in our lobby. One is called Celebrate Recovery. It's for people with hurts, habits, and hang-ups that they need some critical care for, or just some maintenance work. And then there's Re|Engage, an amazing ministry here at Grace Covenant Church. If there was a twelve-step program for marriage, it would be Re|Engage. And there's a couple there that would love to talk to you about how you can get involved with Re|Engage.

If I didn't go to this church, I would go to this church, because we grasp the crying need of the culture and the people involved with it. And we need to learn how to be relationally connected to other human beings. And we can only do that with vulnerability and safety when we become like Christ in all of life and *as* we become like Christ in all of life. And so, that's how we're applying the Gospel most formidably.

**Every marriage is meant to represent God: His perfect relationship with Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as well as His relationship with His people ... We can reveal God by the way we love our spouses.**

**--Tremper Longman**

Here's a wonderful quote from Tremper Longman. He wrote, "Every marriage is meant to represent God: His perfect relationship with Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as well as His relationship with His people ... We can reveal God by the way we love our spouses."

We can reveal God by the way we love our spouses. That's the power of covenant love. You walk down an aisle, you say some words, and people's lives are spiritually altered in a covenant event. The sky's the limit ... no, heaven's the limit. Let's start something new, maybe even as a church. With this covenant renewal service, let's be a church that unconditionally loves and is always looking for ways to submit to one another, care for one another, and is enjoying the covenant that we have with our King, Jesus Christ. Would you join me in prayer?

*Lord Jesus, we are grateful for Your submission to the Father's will, that You would come and humble Yourself to be a man, a man who washes the enemy's feet, a man who chooses to climb upon a cross, a man who turns away mockers, and fulfills the promise of the Father. We're grateful for Your surrender.*

*We're grateful, Lord, that You sent the Spirit; that now we have the power of God himself in our spirits if we merely yield to that. Thy will be done. I want to turn my will over to Your will, that I might be doing things that I wouldn't normally do: unconditional love, unrelenting forgiveness, overflowing joy, service to other people. I ask that You would help us act out that way. And in that, that we would glorify the Father.*

*We're grateful for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and we use this time to recommit to what You have never uncommitted to. And we surrender our lives once more. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*