

# When You are Trying to Figure Out the Family

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*Decision Making & God's Will*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Peter 3:1-7

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We're continuing our series this morning on Decision Making and the Will of God, an expositional treatment of 1 Peter and I hope that you have been working to apply several of the truths that have already been covered. We've seen how in the midst of trials and suffering that one of the things that we can do is we can remember our identity in Christ and focus on that identity as opposed to what trials and suffering do to us. We can focus on the glorious inheritance that we have in heaven and we can embrace the purposes for which God has designed us: that is to proclaim his praises. We've also seen that part of the Christian life, especially with regard to trials and sufferings, means that we submit to those in authority over us and some of that relates to the government and then some of that relates to our submission in the workplace.

This morning, we're going to tackle a different subject, one of the more sacred subjects of our lives and that is the family and without question the family can be one of the greatest earthly pleasures that God allows us to experience. One of the great joys. In fact, this is a picture of my wife and I's wedding day. Don't we look like twelve? I see that picture and I'm like, "Wow! Was I old enough to sign the marriage license myself or did I have to have my Dad sign it for me?"

A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Viars and I had the privilege of teaching at one of our regional biblical counseling training conferences in California and after the conference, I took some vacation time and Stephanie and I actually enjoyed several days out in Yosemite National Park to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and so, one of the pictures that we took was this one. Actually, somebody else took it since we're both there. But it was just a reminder of one of the blessings that God has given to us. I mean, we were at the top of a place called Half Dome in Yosemite. You have to hike to it and we just had a beautiful view, a wonderful time together and it even allowed us to do some reflecting on some of the other blessings that God has given us. This is a picture of our family and so there are three more blessings that kind of came along the way, our three children. Again, the family has just been a tremendous blessing and encouragement, a source of joy. But I also recognize that for many, the family is a source of serious trial and struggle. There have been heartaches, tears, frustrations and concerns, but praise God that in the midst of that, in the midst of trials and suffering, one of the things that he does

in his Word is he gives us some instructions on how it is we can live in the midst of a family. Praise God for that!

So, this morning we're going to be thinking about the subject of when you're trying to figure out the family. With that in mind, I invited you to turn your Bible to 1 Peter 3:1. That's on page 181 of the back section of the Bible in the chair in front of you and I want to begin by helping us to remember that everything that we're going to be talking about today is for our joy, for our benefit, for our help. In other words, what God is putting on us is not burdensome, it's not harsh, it's not mean. It's actually joy filled. Now, if you're there, this is not the only passage in the Bible on the family. I understand that. It's not the only passage on the role of a husband or the role of a wife. I also understand that. And there are challenges. We're not going to deal with children; we're not going to talk about times when families can or are broken apart. Those subjects are for other days. But I don't want to miss the significance of the text that we have in front of us. So, please listen as I, first of all, begin reading,

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external – braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

Now, as I read that I hoped you saw that there was one phrase that was repeated. The first one is, “In the same way,” in verse 1. Did you see that? “In the same way,” verse 1 and then in verse 7, it used it again, “in the same way.” And so that begs the question: in the same way as what? In the same way as what? How is it that wives are supposed to submit in the same way to? What is the “what” part? Now, we have to back up just a little bit in the text for in verse 2:21-25 it explains that “in the same way” part. Notice,

“For you have been called for this purpose.” That is, to submit even if it results in some harsh treatment with respect to bosses, as well as with respect to the government. “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,

so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Notice what this text does for us: the first thing that we see is that these instructions to husbands and these instructions to wives are given and placed in the context of the Lord Jesus and his work. Everything that we're instructed to do as husbands and wives is rooted and grounded in the person and work of Jesus and here is his person and work. The first thing that he did is he is the perfect example of submission. Jesus came to do the will of his Father. Was that always convenient? Was that always convenient? Are you sure? Because here's what happened: he actually died, didn't he? So, there is no one who can really say, "I've out-submitted Jesus." He submitted to his Father all the time. That's going to be particularly helpful to the discussion about wives today.

Notice that that's not all the text says. It says that Christ is the perfect example of entrusting himself to God and if we just go back and think about that, Pilate, you remember what Pilate says to Jesus? He says, "Hey look, do you know that I have the power of life and death over you?" And Jesus says essentially this: "Look dude, don't get too big for your britches, alright? Because whatever authority you have has been given to you by my Father and so here's the level of your authority: what my Father has given to you. So, I'm not going to entrust myself to you. I'm not going to try to manipulate you as if you are the one who is going to rescue me. I'm going to place my trust in God. So, here's the deal: I'm going over your head and if your authority results in my suffering, so be it but I'm not entrusting myself to you. I'm not going to try to manipulate you. I am going to entrust myself to God, to the higher authority."

We also see in verses 24 and 25 that Christ's submission makes it possible for us to die to sin and live to righteousness and here's, I think, the point behind that: we have all of the spiritual resources necessary in order to do the commands that God has giving us. We have what we need in order to fulfill them because of what Christ has done and because of what he is doing. Now, I understand there'll be some who have listened to this text and thought, "Man alive, that sounds crazy." Well, can I encourage you that maybe one of the reasons that it sounds so crazy is that you yet have a personal relationship with Christ. So, can I encourage you that the first step in the journey is actually to see your sin before a holy God, to repent of that sin and to place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone. Until that time, some of the instructions given here are just going to sound a little crazy.

Well, let's get back to the text. Here's the first thing the text tells us: wives are called to submit to their husbands and ladies, I understand this isn't your only role and I also understand you're like, "Yeah, I know. I've been told this before. I don't really want to hear it again." I get that. I get you're like, "Ah man, bummer, I've got to listen to this for a while." Can I encourage you that what the Word of God has done is place this in the context of the person and work of Jesus? And so, put your focus on the reality that God is giving you this instruction because it's good for you, it's for your benefit, it's for your joy. And he's also giving you the perfect example to follow.

Now, Pastor Viars explained that submission means to place yourself voluntarily under the authority of someone else. So, let me just talk to those single ladies for just a moment. This is one of the reasons why it's really important for you to pay attention to the guys you might be interested in. I mean, after all, you have the task of when you decide to take someone as your husband, you are willingly submitting yourself and you might find some guy that is really good looking but if he doesn't get this, he'll be a curse to your soul all the days of your life. So, look for someone who is godly enough to live this out.

That's one of the reasons why, I don't know if I actually do this, but I like thinking about it anyway, planning for it: I care about this because I have a daughter and so I plan when the first guy shows up to have a Bible on one side of the table, a rifle on the other side of the table and what I'm going to tell them is this, "You get to pick. Which one do you want? So, if you do this, we won't need this. If you don't do this, then you get this. Do you understand that?" So, what we're calling for here is I get that these commands are hard, I get that there's a lot at stake. So, for those who aren't yet married, it's a reason to be cautious and careful.

For those who are, notice that this text extends not just to those who are nice husbands, but to those who are not so nice as well. It says, "to those who are disobedient to the word." So, this task that you're given is not just if your husband does what he needs to do, it's a task given to you by the Lord of heaven and earth. Your submission is supposed to look like this first of all: by abandoning your natural tools for gaining security. We admit, submission is a scary place to be. That's why verse 6 reminded us that "just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." We get that submission is a scary place to be because you are, then, under somewhat the control of someone else and you also have to live with the consequences of someone else's decisions. So, there's a consequence associated with that. That's a scary place to be.

But this text over and over again, for the last two chapters, has been encouraging us to fear God. To fear God not man. Fear God. So, therefore, there were two specific ways that he highlights: don't gain your security through manipulation, don't do that and one of the ways that wives manipulate is through your words. I mean, there are some wives that talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. They don't stop talking. That isn't actually very helpful to their husband and nor is it honoring to God. In fact, Proverbs 21:9, I think this is somewhat fascinating as well as humorous, says, "It is better to live in the corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman," so you get the idea. Yak, yak, yak, yak, yak. He finally says, "Alright, I'm outta here." He rolls up his mat, walks up the stairs, up to the roof which were all flat then, lays his mat on the corner of the roof and it's like, "Ah, finally. Peace."

Ten verses later, Proverbs 21:19, the text says this, "It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman." So, you get the idea? Here's what he did: yak, yak, yak, yak, he's up to the corner of the roof and he can still hear her yakking. So he rolls his mat up, walks down the stairs and goes out to the desert. "Finally. Peace." It's

like, ladies, sometimes you just need to learn to not talk so much to manipulate. That's really what this is all about.

It says this: he may be one without a word. Now, here's the other side of this: some ladies are pretty good at this and have been quite successful at manipulating their husbands with their words but can I encourage you that that's not the kind of security that you really want anyway? Because your husband, even if he's a good husband, is a lousy savior. Even good husbands are really lousy saviors. And so, what God is encouraging you to do is to put your trust in him because your husband can't be your savior and if you try to manipulate him so that you get your security in your husband, then you exchange the security that could be found in God for the security that is in a husband who is a lousy savior.

You're also called to abandon your dependence upon your beauty. The text put it this way, "your adornment must not be merely external." And public expressions of beauty have been a part of human society for a long time, ours is not the only culture or the first culture to struggle with this. But here's what the text reminds you: don't manipulate through your beauty. Now, I know some of the husbands are saying, "Dude, don't make that point too hard. I don't want my wife to walk away saying, Alright, I'm going to be as unattractive as possible." That's not what it's all about. It's about this: not using your beauty to manipulate your husband. It's not about being pretty. It's about using that to manipulate him to get your security and what the Lord says is, "Look, don't allow that. Don't go down that path. Don't try to use those natural tools of words and beauty in order to manipulate your husband. Instead, do this: pursue a Christ-like attitude."

That's why the text reminded us to in the same way, in the same way, in the same way and I understand it'll be a whole lot easier to do this if you have a loving, caring, gracious husband but either way, the text calls you to this: pursue a Christ-like attitude. It is in his death that frees you from being dead to sin and alive to righteousness. That's why I want to encourage you. Do you know that song we sang last week? "Lord I need you, every hour, I need you." That's how you're going into this. You're going into this command saying, "Lord, I need your help with this. Thank you that Jesus is the perfect example, that he provides all the spiritual resources necessary but, Lord, I need you because I'm not naturally gifted in this way. My natural tendency is going to be to pursue manipulation and security through words and through my beauty."

So, what do we do instead? This looks like pursuing a gentle and quiet spirit, not insistent on one's rights, not demanding one's own way. I can remember when I first met Stephanie. She worked as a nursing assistant in a nursing home. Now, if any of you have ever done that, that is really hard work. It's challenging work and one of the reasons that it's challenging is because there are some people who are there who don't want to be there. They don't want to be cared for and the last thing they want is for someone to walk in and start caring for them. So, she was spit on, hit, cursed at, made fun of and she still did her job and then she even did this: she would go on some of her days off to take presents to some of the residents. And I thought, huh, wow, she's really nice to people who treat her mean. I bet she might be nice to someone who would treat her nice. I mean,

after all, I don't have a very high standard I have to live up to. As long as I don't spit on her, hit, curse at her, make fun of her. I've been in the category of pretty nice. So, I said, I think I'm going to pursue her. I'm going to pursue her because she has a gentle and quiet spirit. She knows what it looks like to serve even when someone is not treating her very nice. She's already living out this passage. Man, that's a good deal.

Here's what the text also encourages you to do, I've highlighted this a couple of times but now I want to stress it from the passage: and trust yourself to God. Notice, verse 5, it says, "For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in," and what's the next word? "God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands." They put their hope in God and "just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." Think about the Sarah story. Sarah and Abraham are together. God calls them to go to the Promised Land and Sarah is so unbelievably hot apparently that at 65 years old, all the kings are going to be after her. The kings get to pick whoever they want and apparently she is so gorgeous that Abraham is concerned that first of all, he will lose his life and that she will be taken into the harems of these kings. So, he comes up with a plan. Here's his plan: Sarah, tell them that you're my sister which was actually kind of true.

So, what does she do? She does it. She entrusts herself to God and submits to her husband. Is her husband's plan a good plan? Absolutely not. It's crazy. In fact, Abraham is being a wimp here. He's not saying, "I'm entrusting myself to God and if God is going to give us this land, then he will protect me and he will protect you." Instead, he's saying, "You know what? Can you please protect me?" to Sarah. He's asking Sarah to protect him. "You know, can you just like tell him this so that way they don't like hurt me?" And she gets taken twice: once into Pharaoh's harem and once into another king's harem and who fights for Sarah? God fights for Sarah. And here's what God said to Pharaoh, "Dude, if you touch her, I'll kill you. Let her go, now." So, Pharaoh goes, "Okay. It's time to give her back, right now." To the other king, here's what he says to him, "If you touch Sarah, I will kill you and every person in your kingdom." And he goes to Abraham, he confronts Abraham, he's like, "Dude, what are you doing? What you did almost resulted in my death and everybody else's. Do you get that?"

Here's what Sarah does: she just entrusts herself to God and God is the one who fought for her. That's the example here. You want to entrust yourself to God because he's the one who provides the security anyway. He is the one who can deliver you from the fear that submission has. It's not going to come through manipulation, of dealing with your words or your beauty. Entrust yourself to God. That's where the joy is. That's where the benefit is.

Husbands, this text speaks to you too. So, let's talk about the husbands. Their job is called to compassionately care for their wives. Now, just as the single gals, there were some words for the single gals, there are words for singles guys too. So, guys, don't even ask a girl unless you're prepared to do this: don't be messing with them, manipulating them, otherwise, all of us Dads are going to have to get our rifles again, right? And we're

not interested in any of that. We're not interested in your games. We're not interested in any of that playing around junk. So, stop that. Instead, embrace this and husbands, if you're married, you have no choice but to embrace this and that is, in the same way. Just as the example of Christ. Just as Christ entrusted himself to God, so are we to do that and then here's the task that we have been given: to compassionately care for our wives by living according to knowledge. Around here we use the word learner for that but to dwell with your wife, to live with her according to knowledge and that is a joy, it's a privilege to do that.

You know, I showed that anniversary picture on the top of that hike. What I didn't tell you is that it took about eight miles to get there including almost a mile of vertical climb. And there are some of you ladies who are going, "You did that to your wife? How is that living in an understanding way? You were torturing her." Until you know my wife and she's the one who was all excited about it to begin with. I'm thinking to myself, "If I die on this hike, I wonder," because we had to climb up cables and we're huffing up this 45 degree incline up a granite rock and yes, people have died on these things and so I'm climbing up and I'm thinking to myself, "I wonder if the life insurance will pay out?" or if they're going to call my honey and they're going to say, "Look, you know, we would pay it but your husband's a moron and we have a clause, it's called the Moron Clause in the fine print that if your husband is just stupid, you don't get the money." So, that's what I'm thinking. She's like hanging on by one hand, taking pictures. So, if you've been on Facebook and you see pictures of us on these cables, she took them. Real manly man I was, huh? I'm holding on with a death grip on there. She has plans. She wants to go sky diving. She wants to bungee jump off some bridge in New Zealand. I mean, she's going to be the death of me.

You know, that's part of who she is. She's the adventurous one. I was the chicken. I was the cautious one. She's adventurous and so, you know what? I just get to enjoy that and I get to become more adventurous because I married someone who is adventurous. I get to have the joy, the privilege of enjoying all that the adventuresome spirit brings.

Guys, sometimes we don't do so well at this and we don't do so well at it sometimes because we're distracted. I mean, we've got games to watch. We've got hobbies to participate in. We've got work to do. You know, over and over again, we just come up with another excuse and another excuse and another excuse and the days go into weeks and the weeks go into months and the months go into years and we're just distracted. We're not paying a lick of attention to her. We're not dwelling according to knowledge because we've just got so many things going on. I once talked to a guy who his wife was pretty upset at him because he was the commissioner for nine fantasy football leagues. She should've been upset. What do you think? I mean, he had hours and hours and hours of trying to set up all of these things for his leagues and he wasn't paying attention to her.

You know, sometimes we don't do so well at this because we're ignorant. But we just choose not to ask questions. We choose not to learn. I remember in one of the early days of our marriage. We would get to Friday and Stephanie would say, "You know, I'm really looking forward to this weekend when we spend some time together." And my

head about came off of my shoulders because I'm thinking we have been home together every single night and in my world, same place, same time, equals spending time together. Right? Is there any other guy who is like with me on that? Okay. Alright, I see a few guys like yeah, I know what that means. Well, to her, that wasn't what spending time was. Spending time was relating emotionally. It was sharing our deepest feelings. I was like, "I don't care about my feelings. I don't want to share them." But that was where she was so I had to learn that spending time together, that's not just being in the same room at the same time. I had to learn that. Sometimes we don't do this very well because we're just ignorant.

And sometimes our wives are moving targets, right? They are moving targets and so are we so we won't fuss at them for that. But I can remember one of the times I decided, I said, "Hon, on a scale of 1-10, how is our marriage?" I have since learned that asking such stupid questions is not healthy for our relationship because here's what I'm thinking: I'm thinking the real numbers are like 9, 9 ½, that's what I'm thinking. I cut low, I built some cushion in there, do you know what I mean? I built some cushion. So, I was thinking it's gotta be at least 8 ½ so I'm going to shoot for 8 ½ but I'm thinking 9, 9 ½ for me. She says, "Well, I don't know. Maybe 6, 7?" I'm like 6, 7! Are you married to somebody else? Because I'm the 8 ½ guy. I'm the 8 ½, 9 dude, so who else are you married to that's like a 6?

I start going through the questions like, "Okay, what about this? What about this? What about this?" I start asking a bunch of questions and by the time I get done, I'm thinking, you know what, I'm doing pretty good. I'm like 46 out of 50. In my world, that's a 9.2. Here's the part I didn't quite have right: that some of the things were worth more than others. So, I was great on all the stuff that didn't count for anything but I was lousy on some of the stuff that counted for a lot. Once you get that figured out, they change, don't they? So, you start shooting for the 10s but those are the old 10s, there are new 10s now. That's why you can never get to the 9 or 9 ½ because the new 10s just keep changing on you and so you're always stuck in the 1s. I get that.

Well, that's one of the reasons why we gave you in your bulletin today a tool: 50 questions to ask your wife and there are some softballs in there, you know, things like, "What do you like to do? What is your favorite food? What is your favorite color?" so there are some softballs going. Then there are a few like hardball questions. Like this: "What do I do that irritates you?" I would suggest you just ask that question about once every 3-4 years. You just need to kind of get occasional hits in there but you don't want to know what the answer to that is every day, right? I mean, just every now and then put that in there. That's a hardball question. Or what about the question of "What fears do you have that I don't seem interested in?" Boy, that's a good hardball question, huh? It gets to the heart, not just dealing with surface stuff.

So guys, we're called to live with our wives in an understanding way. We're also called to understand her weaker position. There is something else in play in the text here. It says, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman." You know, your wife by virtue of her



willingness to marry you and to voluntarily place herself under your authority has taken the weaker position. So, one of the questions that we have to ask ourselves as husbands is what it would be like to live under our authority. What is it like to live under our authority? I think there is a fleshly propensity to becoming the very thing you hate. Let me explain what I mean by that. Let's say at work, your boss begins giving some directives. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Directives and you're thinking to yourself, "You know, I think my boss is over-reacting. I think my boss is creating a bunch of unnecessary work. I think my boss is creating an oppressive environment around here." And so, yeah, you obey and you obey because you know the Word of God encourages you to obey but in your heart of hearts you're struggling. You're struggling to do that. You're irritated. You're frustrated.

Now, have you got that picture in mind? Got it? Fast forward three hours. Three hours later you go home and your foul mood is about ready to come out because now what you start doing is giving directives. You need to do this. You need to do this. You need to do this. And as soon as there's any pushback on that, boom, you let them have it. I mean, you just lay the guilt trip on. "You have it easy. You don't know what it's like to go to work. I bring a paycheck home every week, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." You become the very thing you hate. You can't stand it when your boss does that to you. It annoys the fire out of you when he does that or she does that and then you go home and because you happen to be the boss now, you become the very thing you hate. And what God says is this: do you have leadership? Yes. Do you have the responsibility to set the direction of the family? Yes. Can you make a decision? Can you give a directive? Yes. But when you do that, you understand the position of the people that you're leading. You don't just do it whimsically, you do it understanding the position of everybody that you are leading. You're understanding her weaker position.

Then the text encourages us as well to treat her as a fellow heir. You know, one of the dangers of being a leader, being responsible, is that you begin to treat people as if they're your possessions. People are not your possessions. They belong to God. That's why he describes it this way: show honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life. She is redeemed. She is the bride of Christ. She is a child of God. She is adopted in the family. She has an inheritance. She has the spiritual blessings that you have. So, therefore, she deserves honor. She is not your possession, she is God's possession which is why when she is told to submit, she is told to entrust herself to God. She is told to follow the example of Sarah who even in obeying Abraham suffered as a result of it and she willingly entrusted herself to God. Well guys, you have to recognize that that is a task for you too and to recognize that that is what she is doing. She isn't trusting herself to God.

Now, here's a couple of ways that honor can be shown. There is a little principle of four Ps, you've probably heard this before. Present your partner perfect in public. Your partner is not perfect, we get it. Just because we're not perfect, right? None of us, there is no one righteous, no not one. There is nobody who meets the perfect standard outside of Jesus Christ alone. We all get that, but that doesn't mean we have to know all of the ways that your partner isn't perfect and all too often what happens is people start sharing all the

ways that their spouse isn't very nice or isn't very godly or isn't this or isn't that. That's not showing honor. It's a direct affront to God when we do that.

Here's a second way and this particularly for those of you who have children. You know, sometimes children both young and old speak to their mother differently than they speak to their father. Did you ever notice that? There's a little bit more snarkiness in it and so here's what you as a husband have the privilege to do: to tell the kids that their mother is your wife and you are not going to tolerate that kind of discussion. I remember when I was about 15 or 16. Apparently I was getting a little bit too big for my britches because my Daddy came down and he said, "Hon, I want you to know something, I love you, I care for you, I want the best for you but if you make me choose between you and your mother, you will lose every time. Do you get that?" And I can remember thinking, "I wonder what that means? Does that mean my Dad would drive me to the courthouse, that he would drive me to the juvenile detention center and say, Look, I have an unruly child that needs to be handled." I wasn't 100% sure and I wasn't about ready to find out either. I had decided I got my place. My Dad explained to me that there was a hierarchy in the home and I wasn't at the top of it. And so it was time for me to act like I understood that I was under authority including my Mom.

So, the text encourages us to honor our wives as a fellow heir of the grace of life. Then the text ends by recognizing the severe spiritual consequences and please notice the last phrase in verse 7, "so that your prayers will not be hindered." That does not come up in the Bible very often. One of the few other times that we see a statement like this is actually in Jeremiah 7 and in Jeremiah 7, here's what God tells Jeremiah. He says to him, "Tell the people to stop praying. I want them to stop praying and the reason is because I am sick and tired of hearing all their whining, fussing and complaining. The day for talking to me is over and it is now time for discipline." You don't find that very often in the Word. It was found in Jeremiah 7 and it's found here, where God says, "You know, if you're not interested in obeying me and in following my Word, then I'm not particularly interested in listening to your prayers." So, it's time for you to recognize the seriousness of this command. I put you in authority, yes, but I'm expecting you to use that authority to bring me honor and glory and blessing to your home, not the other way around.

Let me close with just a few concluding remarks about husbands and wives in general. The first thing is I hope you see that there is great joy in this. I hope you're not walking away feeling like, "Oh man, I hate this passage. I just hate talking about some mission. I hate talking about my role as a husband. I just can't stand this." I hope instead you'd walk away saying, "Boy, thank you Lord for providing me instructions on how a family is supposed to work. Thank you for that."

I also hope you're walking away thinking this: that God in his goodness decided to ground the instructions to husbands and the instructions to wives in the person and work of Jesus so you're not asked to do this all on your own. You're asked to tap into the spiritual resources of Jesus Christ and follow his example of how he entrusted himself to God.

I also hope that you're thinking that one of the ways that we can be different in our culture is to have a family that is godly. You know, the family is a tough place right now and in our world and in our culture, it doesn't seem to be getting much better. So, this is maybe one of the ways in which God is going to give us a particular opportunity to show his goodness. Now, some of you are in a place, you're like, "Alright, I'm running with this. I'm applying these truths and I'm already doing it now, I just need to get to a better place. I have a little step of growth," and you can do that on your own. Great. But there may be some of you who are here and you would say you're not in a good place and you know it, but nobody else does because you come to church, you smile, you sing, you participate in ABF. You're here, you're involved but nobody knows what's going on behind closed doors. There are real challenges occurring and I want to encourage you that if that is the case, that you would seek some help. There are all sorts of places to find it. You can seek help in your adult Bible fellowship. Your teacher would be encouraged in order to share with you, to talk with you and to help you get to a better place. For those of you who are members of the church, you have a deacon and you can call them. One of their responsibilities, their primary responsibility as a deacon is to care for the people in the church. So, call them and you ask, "Can we talk? I want to talk about a couple of things." Let's get them handled now. You can talk to me as your service pastor and say, "I need to talk for a minute. We've got to do something because we're not in a good place." Or maybe through the counseling ministry but please don't just let it go. Please do something with it. If this isn't the picture of your family, then please do something about it before another week goes by and we move on to a new topic, move on to a new subject and then we're just kind of forgetting about this one.

Let's stand together for prayer.

*Father, thank you for your amazing grace and your love for us. Lord, I do pray that you would help us see the joy and the encouragement that can be found in the family. And I would ask for those who are husbands today, that they would pursue what it means to honor you by living with their wives in an understanding way and showing them honor. I pray, Lord, for the wives that they would entrust themselves to God and they would be able to submit to their husbands and demonstrate a love and care for you in how they handle their husband. And, Lord, for those who are single, I pray that you would help them to see the significance of each of these passages for their own life in preparation for what you may have in store for them at some point later. In Jesus' name. Amen.*