

The Evangelistic Power of Feminine Beauty

Our Identity in Christ

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3. We're starting a new chapter today. 1 Peter 3, we're looking at verses 1 to 7. Title of the message this morning is "The Evangelistic Power of Feminine Beauty." The evangelistic power of feminine beauty. You see as we look at the text, we're looking at some specific instructions about marriage. He turns to the subject of marriage in verses 1 to 7 of this third chapter, verses 1 to 6, particularly aimed at Christian wives and how they are to live, and yet in context, the larger context, which, you know, we always need to see the Scripture in light of what's gone before, what goes after, the context helps us understand the intent. We see that the larger section of this letter is about making the gospel appealing to unbelievers. You know, this is what we're called to do. This is how we're called to impact the world. In fact, I think it's so helpful to remember this, that so often we get discouraged by circumstances in our lives. We get discouraged by the events that we see unfolding around us in the broader culture. We get discouraged by just the challenges and difficulties of day-to-day life in our own families, in our own workplace, various challenges we have, but especially I think Christians today were tempted to be discouraged by the massive movements we see in culture that seem to be going so firmly against the gospel and against the truth. We see every day more and more confusion, more and more misery as the world becomes darker and darker. How are we to bear up? What are we to do in a world like this? And we can see the relevance of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 11:1, "When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" When the foundations of the world are falling apart, what can the righteous do? Well, the Psalmist says, remember that the Lord is in his holy temple and it's amazing how this passage really relates to that issue. You know, what can we do? What can you do on a daily basis? Is there any hope of changing society? What the Scripture calls us to do is to live out the Christian life right where you are in the way that you can and that you've been called to. This is the flow of Peter's thought. I mean, remember he's writing a letter to people who are experiencing great opposition to their faith. Remember the circumstances of the recipients of this epistle, 1 Peter written in the 60s AD, around 63 AD, about a year before a massive persecution breaks out in Rome and throughout the Roman Empire against Christians. But they're already being maligned and hated and we see that as you read through the whole book, that Christians are being misunderstood, that the culture is against them, and he's writing to them to teach them how to bear up. What can you do? When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

In fact, it's important before we read the text of chapter 3 to look at the larger passage, and a key verse that really shows us the main thrust of this passage is in verse 12 of chapter 2. This is the key idea that's undergirding everything Peter's saying in this section. Chapter 2, verse 12. He's telling the believers who are living in a world that's hostile to them. Verse 12 of chapter 2, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." Do you see the hostility that they feel toward those to whom he writes? You're being slandered as evildoers by the Gentiles. You're a Christian. You love Jesus. You have the love of God in your hearts. You just want to follow him. You want to live for him, but you're being maligned and misunderstood. You're being called a hater when you are someone who loves people in a way you've never loved people before you came to Christ. Now you come to love them and you're seen as someone who is hateful. The same thing was happening to them. They were being slandered as evildoers, but live in such a way, keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that they may, by your good deeds as they observe them, go from being slanderers to being those who glorify God.

This is the evangelistic purpose of our godliness. This is really why we're here. Why are you here? You're here to live a Christian life, to exemplify in your day-to-day behavior, to exemplify in your day-to-day behavior the difference that Jesus has made and in so doing, to bring people out of darkness into light. God will use your behavior, your way of life, the different way that you live, he will use that as a frame for the gospel and he will bring people out of the darkness of slandering Christians and hating those who love God to making them people who now glorify God. Radical transformation. That's the blueprint of the whole passage here. He's saying this is why you're here. I mean, the reason God has left us in this sin-sick world is so that we can live different lives and we can help people see that God is good and that they can love God, that this is the best way to live, loving God. The evangelistic purpose of our lives, we're here to reach others. We're not here just to be content and happy in Christ. We're here to grow in our contentment in Christ. We're here to, as we read earlier in John 15, to abide in Jesus, to abide in the vine, to bear fruit and that fruit is godly character, and that fruit of godly character results in also the additional fruit of conversions of people around us. They see the difference in you then they believe the message that you are offering.

So this is the larger argument and so he says keep your behavior excellent, that is, your way of life and the idea of the word "excellent" there in 1 Peter 2:12 speaks of beauty. It's a word actually translated, could be translated "good." Keep your behavior good. But this particular word "good" is a word which speaks, the word is kalos. not another word that is often translated "good," agathos, which means good and useful. This word means, kalos, means good, beautiful. Keep your behavior beautiful. It's good. It's intrinsic beauty. It's good that's intrinsic goodness that is beautiful to the eye and the idea is that when Christians live as God has called them to live, now being transformed more and more by his word, that there is a beauty about our lives that causes people to go from maligning us at first and slandering us at first because we're so different, to actually seeing the beauty of the way we live, that they glorify God. They become followers of

Jesus Christ. The power of your life. Doesn't mean we don't share the gospel with our mouths. Yes, we do. But the power of your life can't be overestimated. It's so important. And that's the rationale when he comes in this section to then talking about what does a beautiful life look like? And he goes into this issue of submission, which we will see again in our passage.

Let's look at our passage now, 1 Peter 3, 1-7.

1 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, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 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. 5 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; 6 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. 7 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.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we rejoice in Your goodness. We come this morning to praise and honor You. We come to hear from You, Lord, from Your word. We pray that You, by the power of Your Spirit, open the eyes of our hearts to see and to understand, to submit and obey to Your word. Lord, grant us deeper repentance, deeper faith in our great Savior. Show us Your ways and give us Your grace to walk in them. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So the evangelistic power of feminine beauty, this larger context is talking about the evangelistic call of the Christian, that we are to live in such a way that we make the gospel appealing to others, that they see our excellent way of life. That way of life I've mentioned is a key term in Peter. It's translated "behavior" in chapter 2, verse 12, "Keep your behavior excellent." It's the same word is there twice in our texts this morning. Behavior translated twice in the New American Standard that I'm reading from, "by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." The ESV translates that word "conduct." It literally means "way of life, the way that you live." So he's saying that we are called to keep our behavior back in 2:12, to keep our conduct, our way of living, to show the beauty of it, to be living by God's grace so that we show the beauty of what he's called us to, a radical new way of living and in so doing, we bring people from being those who scorn to those who joyfully submit to Christ and glorify him.

That's the evangelistic call upon our lives, that our lives make a difference. It's not just our words, it's our life that must also proclaim the gospel and when he...look at the larger context again for a moment. We saw 2:12 is setting this as really a rubric over the whole section, "Keep your behavior excellent." Make your way of life beautiful among the Gentiles so that they will come to faith. And then his first three application areas are about submission. 2:13, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him." Submit yourselves to the governing authorities he says in 2:13-17. You're going to make your life beautiful by living a life of submission to the governing authorities. Now we talked about this, it's not absolute, it means only as long as they're not telling you to disobey God, but that the attitude of the Christian is one of glad submission, trusting that God is at work in authority. And then he says in chapter 2:18, he turns to a second realm of authority and again that same verb is there, "Servants, be submissive to your masters," 2:18. "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable." And from 18 to 20, he talks about submission to our economic authorities, the employer that you work for.

So Christians are to exhibit a radically different, beautiful life by the way we respond to government and by the way we respond to our bosses. This is how we show the glory of the gospel. Isn't that counterintuitive? I mean, just think about when you got saved, did you think, "Hey, I know the way the Lord is going to really make the gospel attractive through me is to make me a more submissive citizen and a more submissive worker, a better worker." That's just not the way you think, I don't think. You think about what you want to share. You think about, "Hey, the joy that I have, the peace that I have, that's attractive to people, right?" Yeah, but those things are related to this idea of submission and we're going to see that as we get into this third area. Then he goes to the third area, and he says, not only employment, be submissive in an area of employment, be submissive in the area of government, then he talks to familial relationships, chapter 3, verse 1, our text, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands." Even the disobedient and the disobedient can be won by the behavior, the way of life of their wives.

It's submission. It's a willingness to submit to authority. Essentially, what's happened here, you know, the gospel, the good news, is an authoritative message. In fact, the word gospel itself euangelion in Greek, eu or epsilon, epsilon, eu in English, transliterate those two letters, eu means good, and it's the good message. The angelion is the message, the angelos is the messenger, the angel is a messenger, but the angelion is the message, the good message. But it's not just the good message, it's to look at the word angelo, the verb from which angelion comes from, the message, is an authoritative message. It's an announcement, a proclamation from the king. The euangelion, used in secular circles before it was used in the New Testament, was the proclamation of the king, the authoritative message of the king. In fact, the angelos, the messenger, was the herald. You've seen maybe some old movies or you've read books where the herald goes through crying out and proclaiming the message for all to hear, "Hear ye! Hear ye!" And he announces the proclamation of the king. It's not just, you know, "Hey, the king has some ideas he'd like you to consider. No, the king has a message and you need to hear it and

you need to obey it." It's an authoritative message and the gospel is an authoritative message. It's a wonderful message. It's good news. It's the good news that the King has a way for you and me who are sinners to be made right with him but it's not up to us to determine it. He's told us the way.

It's an authoritative message and so the gospel, the command, as Paul even said in Acts 17 when he was preaching to a very hostile audience on Mars Hill in Athens, he said that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead and God commands men everywhere. God commands men to repent. That's the gospel. You are commanded to repent. The King has spoken, and you're commanded to repent and so that the message of the gospel is essentially a message to come under the King's authority. You see that? How do you get saved? If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved, Romans 10:9. But it's confessing him as Lord. It's submitting to King Jesus. The gospel at its heart is an authoritative message. It's a wonderful message. It's the message that, listen, the King you thought was just angry with you, he is angry with you over your sin, yes, he is, but he has made a way for you to be made right to him. There's an offer, not just of a pardon, there's an offer of complete restoration to fellowship where you become a child of the King. You'll become his beloved son or daughter. But it is still an authoritative message you have to submit to King Jesus. Now think about that. The whole world, the problem with the whole world is they believe God is not trustworthy and is not worthy of their submission and the message of the gospel is he is. He can be trusted. He is good. There's no better place to be than to be a subject of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He's a God who loves his children. Every command that he's given us is for our good. It's so much better to do it his way. Life is found in that.

Just a brief illustration, side thing, think about this. I was thinking about this the other day. We were out eating somewhere and this poor young couple was having trouble with one of their kids and, you know, we don't know the circumstances, maybe he was sick or she, it was a little girl, she was maybe four or five, and she was basically just going nuts. And it was a situation where just observing it, you know, you're not trying to watch it, you're trying to eat and I always try to not make somebody be embarrassed, you know, because, hey, it's hard. Even if you're a great parent, there are times where your child, man, they will just rise to the occasion to embarrass you and humiliate you. Isn't it amazing? It's like even the reverse of that. Your child learns to do something, and now that they've learned it, you want to show to their grandparents or somebody else, "Hey, you know, Jimmy, what is the," you know, whatever. You say it, and they're like, "You're crazy. What are you talking about? I've never heard what you're talking about." "You've just been doing this. Come on, do it, child!" It's like, "No, it's an opportunity for me to get a dig at you." I don't know what's going on in their hearts. Stage fright, maybe. Rebellion, more likely. So we have those moments, but the flip side is when they just act out, and it's just amazing. Even when you're doing a good job, there are moments where you have to now, it's an opportunity for me to instruct them and to discipline them. In love, but firmly, right?

We were thinking about this young lady who was struggling with this daughter, just reflecting on it, praying for her, certainly not a time you can go talk to anybody. They're just in the middle of just crisis, you know. And I was thinking though, as we walked away from that situation and, you know, the world, they convinced themselves, and this is what she was doing, she was arguing with her little three-year-old about why she needed to do what she needed to do. You know, like, "It's better if you do this. And this is why we do this. And this is why we do this. And this is..." And really what that three-year-old needed is somebody just to tell them what to do. There's no arguing. There's no reasoning. "I say so." There's a place for that, especially in the early years. That's what you're establishing. You're establishing, "You must do this because mommy says so. You must do this because daddy said so. You are not authorized to reason things out and decide what is best for yourself as a three-year-old. No, you are not." And what I was thinking, as I was thinking about it, praying about that later, that is the happiest place to be as a three-year-old with a parent that is not putting upon you the burden of deciding everything, reasoning with you to convince you to eat your food, reasoning with you why this is a good thing to do. No, you don't have the capacity to make decisions like that. It's much better to be told where to go and be told what to eat and to do it. As a three-year-old, that's what it's to be a three-year-old and a four-year-old and it's just better. It's a better place to be. God says that's how you're to raise your children. God knows. The world is doing it wrong. That's just another example of how authority is meant by God to bring freedom and blessing. It's just, it's his way, it's the way he's designed it.

Now, he's talking about this in all of our lives so not only are we saying to our little child to be under authority, we are learning as Christians that we can be in subjection to the government, unless they tell us to disobey God. We're in subjection to our boss, unless he tells us to disobey God. And we have an attitude that joyfully does that. And wives can be submissive to their husbands because they know that God's at work. And we fulfill our roles under authority and there is a joy and beauty about that. The world functions as God intended it. God is a God of authority. When he created man, he gave man instructions. He didn't say to man, "Hey, what do you think about this? I'm thinking maybe we don't eat from that one tree. Are you good with that?" He commanded him. That's the relationship that God has with his people and isn't that just good and right? After all, he is God and he has created a world where authority exists. It was there in the garden. He made the man first, the man named all the animals. Then he makes the woman. I think the names would have been better myself if the woman had been involved in that process of naming the animals. I mean, what do you think? I mean, just think about your relationship with your wife. Do you think she would be better at naming animals than you would? I would have thought my wife would be. But God did it this way because he was showing us that the man has the authority and then the wife is made as his helper.

Now, listen, there's equality before God. We're going to see that real clearly as we look at the rest of the New Testament. Galatians 3:28, there's neither male nor female in Christ Jesus. We're all equal. Absolutely. But the Lord has made gender, roles, sexuality. He's ordained it from the beginning. He, as Jesus said, "Have you not read that he made them male and female from the beginning?" Matthew 19. And in that, he made an authority

structure within the home, the marriage relationship. The husband is the head. The wife is to submit to his headship. He is to serve her as the head. He's to be like Jesus.

This is the beauty of Christian marriage. Ephesians 5 says, "Wives, be submissive to your husbands. Submit to your husbands as unto the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the head of the body." But then he goes on to say, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." Marriage is made not only for the well-being of humanity and for a family to have a wonderful environment, this love relationship that children can be reared in, but it's made to picture the gospel. A man loving his wife as Christ loved the church, a woman submitting to her husband as the church submits to Christ, such beauty in that and there it was in the very beginning when God made Adam, God made Eve. He's ordained authority and authority does not diminish. Value. I mean, this is true in every area, we have to obey political authorities, you have to obey political authorities that are not as smart as you. I mean, sometimes they are, sometimes they're not. Often they're not, right? But they're in authority.

I love how God says to Nebuchadnezzar, he hears that voice out of heaven, the angelic watchers, remember? Daniel 4, if you haven't read it, recently read it. But he hears the voice out of heaven, Nebuchadnezzar. This is before he comes to know God. He hates God. He's an arrogant man, probably one of the most arrogant men to ever live. He is vain, and it's all about vain glory. Everything he's done, he thinks he's done by his own power and his own wisdom. And so he hears a voice out of heaven, which tells him what's going to happen to this tree. I mean, he sees this vision of this tree and Daniel's going to interpret for him, but the voice out of heaven tells him that this is all going to happen so that you will know that God bestows the kingship upon whomever he wishes, that God makes whoever is king, king. It's whoever he wishes, and I love this part and the first time he says it, and even upon the lowliest of men. I love that. That was right for Nebuchadnezzar. You think you're all that? Your position has nothing to say about your ability. God said so even over at the lowliest of men. But he's the one in authority and he's glorified by this, and the whole world works because of this.

Now, that being said, all unbelievers are radically opposed to authority. They're opposed to the authority of God. They don't want God to rule over them. They hate him, and they don't trust him. But one of the things, the reason Peter spends his time on authority is, one of the ways that you and I testify to the truthfulness of the gospel is, if we trust God to be working through authority, and we have an attitude and disposition of submission. And we live that way, people look at it and at first they're horrified by it and they slander us as evil doers, but you keep living that way and they start to see in their heart of hearts, "You are living the way God intended. You are living the way I was made to live." I'm talking as an unbeliever looking at your life. They're denying it, they're denying it, they're suppressing the truth, but it's written in their hearts. They look at your life and they finally say, "You are living as I was made to live and it is beautiful." You see how that just empowers the message? You're living the gospel.

The gospel is this, that God is good and can be trusted and it's even this, Isaiah 52, I think it's verse 7, it's one of my favorite verses in Isaiah, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news." I just think it's so awesome. How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him. Of him. Most men's feet are not lovely but how lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings the gospel, the good news, and you know what the good news is? Your God reigns. He proclaims to Zion, "Your God reigns," that your God is sovereign. He's sovereign over every authority. He's sovereign over everything that's happening in my life and therefore, I, in submitting to him, am so free. It's like that little child I was talking about earlier. She's being a little tyrant and it's pitiful and it's her sin nature and her family's inviting her, mom's inviting her to take control, but you know who the most miserable person in that situation is? It's not mom and dad and they are miserable. It is that little girl. She is the most miserable person of all and so when you see a child like that, don't be angry with them, pity them and pray for them that they'll come to know and somebody will get, and maybe you have an opportunity to talk to the parent and let them know God's way is not for them to be in charge of everything.

When you come to submit to the fact that he is King and he is Lord and he is ruling over everything, it just calms your soul and you know God is good and now your message that when you proclaim it, come to King Jesus and bow down to him and worship him, receive the good news that God has made a way for sinners like you and me who deserve his wrath to be made right with him, and you frame it with a life like that, that is a powerful message. And that's essentially what he's saying in 1 Peter 3:1 to 6, the evangelistic power of feminine beauty, because what we're going to see in this, the feminine beauty here is that God has made two genders, two sexes, male, female, and he's made the female so that in relation to the husband, in the marriage relationship, there is something incredibly beautiful that when a woman lives in submission to her husband, joyfully trusting that God's at work, she submits to her husband as to the Lord, Ephesians 5:22, knowing that God is at work, there's something that is compelling about that. It's so compelling that even her ungodly wicked husband of all people is saved. That's what he says.

Now, what we want to do is look at the text here under three points kind of quickly; it's going to take more than just today to unpack this passage. I want to see the internal argument here. There are a lot of particulars we're going to need to address as we go along, and many of them we'll have to wait till next Sunday, Lord willing. But I want you to follow the argument. So we're going to, the three points this morning follow the argument of the passage. These six verses, 3:1-6, the instruction to the wife, the Christian wife and essentially, the first point is the instruction itself. The instruction. Peter gives Christian wives a clear instruction. "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands." Now it's interesting, it's not in the Greek, an imperative. This is a participle and strictly speaking, if you translated it literally, "In the same way, you wives, submitting to your own husbands." It's analogous to chapter 2, verse 18, did the same thing, "Servants, being submissive to your masters." It's not really imperative. The imperative was back in verse 13, "Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human institution." That was an imperative in the Greek. And these other two participles do borrow that imperatival force, but strictly speaking, they're not an imperative. He's

already given the command, "be submitted to every human institution." Every human institution, every place where there's authority in life, be submissive to it, government, employment, family. You see how he's going through various institutions. So that command "be submissive, place yourself under." This word *hupotasso*, the Greek verb, was used particularly in the area of the military. Place yourself under, that is follow orders, place yourself under orders. Clear authority in this term. Some people try to explain it away that it's not talking about it. No, it is talking about authority.

Place yourself under your husband, under him in rank is the idea, placing yourself under your husband. Now, it's important to say your own husband. Being submissive to your own husbands. The wording here is actually emphatic in the original. He could have said it in more common ways to say it without the particular adjective he uses here, but he uses an adjective which really speaks of one's own and separate from everyone else. Exclusive to yourself. That is, your husband and your husband alone is the idea. And he uses exactly the same wording in chapter 3, verse 5, when he speaks of the women in former times. We see that in verse 5, "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." Now, what this is saying is that the call to submission is not female submit to males in general. No, not at all. He's clearly specifying it is wives being submissive to their own husbands. But that is what is called for, a placing under the authority of your own husband, to trust that God has placed you under your husband and that when you submit to him, you are submitting to God, unless he's asking you to do something God's word forbids.

That's the instruction, being submissive to your own husbands. That's the first point. The second point, the rationale. He doesn't just give an instruction, he gives a rationale. A reason. Why? God's gracious to give us reasons like this. He never needs to give us a reason. He could just tell us what to do and that should be it, right? But he's so kind and gracious to tell us why. And what's the rationale? What's there in verse 1? "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." They may be won. The unbelieving husband is won by the behavior of the believing wife and it happens without a word. You know, he's saying it's more important how you live than what you say. If you're a Christian woman married to an unbelieving husband, it doesn't mean that you don't speak to him about the gospel, there are times where you do, but he's saying major, major, major on how you live, not what you say because you can win him without a word. He may not want to hear what you have to say anymore about the gospel. He may shut the conversation down, but he cannot deny the transformation in your life.

They may be won without a word by the behavior, that is, the way of life. The attitude that you would be submissive and trusting your husband, even though he's an unbeliever, that God's working through the fact that you're married to an unbeliever, that God saved you and you're married to this unbeliever who doesn't, who is in many ways, as the Scripture says, every unbeliever is foolish. I mean, they're in the dark. They can't see which way is up and you're attached to them and God says, "Follow them." That's kind of frightening. But when you understand who God is, that he makes no mistakes. This is

what he's saying. I mean, because it's easy for a Christian woman. Now, you know, the Lord. You now see what you didn't see before. Everything has changed. You've gone from darkness to light. Think about that. If you both were married as unbelievers, let's think of a couple. They're both married as unbelievers and the woman comes to faith. They were both in the dark. They were both, you know, life was upside down. They were living with all the wrong values and now this woman has come from darkness into light. And the joy of her heart, freedom, set free from sin, growing in holiness, knowing what life's all about, but she's still married to this guy over here who's in the dark and he seems to get sometimes dumber every day. Sin doesn't stand still, does it? I mean, seriously, you watch unbelievers as they get older, they tend to get more nasty, more ungodly. Not always at the same rate. But so she feels in many ways like she's shackled to a dead man and in reality, she is.

What a terrible place to be, thinking of it humanly but God says, "No. I knew before you were born I was going to bring you to faith and you were going to be married to that guy. I wouldn't have let it happen if I didn't have a purpose in it. You are where you're supposed to be. You can trust that I'm working through the marriage relationship because I always work through the marriage relationship." Every marriage that happens between a man and a woman, every other kind is a lie, every marriage that happens between one man and one woman, God is effecting it. They can be married by a Hindu priest. They can be married by the justice of the peace. They can be intending for God to have nothing to do with it. But if they're making promises, they're doing what God ordained in the very beginning, from the very beginning of time, a man and a woman joining together to be man and wife. It was his idea. Nobody's taking it away from him. When it happens, he did it. He sovereignly allowed it. And so you can know that you're married to the man God brought you to. In some way, you may have been thinking wrong. You can repent for your wrong thinking. You can repent for the way that your wrong values that led you to do it. But God has done it. And you now can know that the man you're married to is the man you're supposed to be married to. God has ordained it. And you need to know that at the very depth of your soul so that you can then live out the gospel. With all the challenges that you have and they can be, they can be great, God's grace is sufficient. The God who put you there will equip you to the place he puts you. Christ, is he unable to make you fruitful in that circumstance? Is his power limited? Should he have made an addendum in John 15 when he says, "Abide in Me and you'll bear much fruit," and said, "except if you're married to an ungodly man." You abide in Jesus, you will bear fruit.

So trust in his sovereignty and they will be won. The power of feminine beauty will overwhelm this guy. He's not making a promise it's always going to happen, but he's saying that it is always a possibility because God can work in these circumstances through his grace to bring even the most hardened person to the Lord. When he says "them who are disobedient to the word," other translations, "do not believe the word," the NIV says. "Do not obey the word," the ESV says, and the King James as well. It is a word which speaks of obedience, disobedience, but it's also rooted in the root word, the root idea of this word that's translated "disobedient" is unbelieving, unpersuaded. It means to be unwilling to be persuaded, and therefore disobedient. See, the disobedience is the fruit, the root is an unwillingness to believe.

So he's saying, you're married to someone who's hardened in unbelief. Even if they're hardened in unbelief, it's not like they're open and seeking. No, this guy's hardened in unbelief. It says, even that man can be won without a single word. Now he has to have the gospel. You can only get saved through the Scriptures. He's got to hear the gospel sometime, but he's saying that without a word from the wife. And isn't it, it's just natural that most, I mean, it's not true. I'm a man who speaks. I talk a lot. As a preacher, you have to do that. And I talk a lot. I'm more, I'm higher than the average. You know, if you've seen that, like the average man speaks 12,000 words a day, the average woman, 24,000. I think that's something I saw 10 or 15 years ago, 12,000 to 24,000, twice as many. Could be higher than that. But anyway, 12,000, 24,000. So a man goes at work, he's at work all day, and he has to use up all of his 12,000 words at work and he comes home and, "I'm like, I'm all out of words. I can't talk." And he's sit and watches television or read a book, right? No, that's not really, there's no biblical authority for saying you don't need to talk when you come home. That's not at all. Just because there's only 12,000 words, you can, by God's grace, add another 6 or 8,000 in when you need to.

But it's more natural for women to talk and so I just need to persuade him, I need to talk to him, I need to argue with him, I need to urge him to believe, and he's saying it's much more powerful if you will devote your energy somewhere else than words. If you do what God says to do, your husband can be converted, can be won without a word by your way of life as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. They will see in you such a change. They'll see in you that God can be trusted. If you can trust this man, you're not really trusting him, you're trusting God. That's why even in a Christian marriage, submit to your husband as to the Lord. You're married to a believing husband, he's not worthy of trust either, not absolute trust, basic trust, but not absolute trust, but the Lord is worthy of absolute trust.

So submit to him as to the Lord. They observe your chaste and respectful behavior. The husband sees you live out the gospel because he sees you, this chaste means pure, has the idea of holy and respectful behavior, that is, you're respecting him, you're honoring him, you're walking in purity. You're honoring him. You're trusting him. You're following him. Your disposition is to support him and to follow him and he sees that and he understands as he sees that respectful behavior, it's so different than the way you used to be. It's not natural for a woman to follow a man like that, not in our sin. I mean, you're following an imperfect sinner who doesn't know what he's doing half the time, and then you're an imperfect sinner who is struggling to trust the Lord yourself. But when you believe that God is at work, and I love this, the idea of "respectful" translates the phrase "with fear." They observe your chaste and with fear behavior, literally. And "with respect" is a fine translation, but the idea I think here is that you're respecting your husband because you fear God. You know God's at work in this man. An unbeliever, yes, but he's my authority and so I respect him because I respect and fear God. That's what it means to submit to your husband as to the Lord. The Lord's at work in that.

So the rationale, the instruction is to be submissive to your husband. The rationale is, why? Because you can win them. And then he gets to the third point is the means, the

instruction. How do you carry this out? How do you do? How do you show this submission that will win him? And what he's going to essentially say, and we're going to unpack this next time, but verses 3 to 6 he's basically saying the way that you win them is you focus on inward beauty. You focus on true feminine inward beauty. Your adornment must not be merely external. This is actually imperative. Greek has third-person imperatives, and this is actually a third-person imperative. Literally, it says, let her adornment not be external. But it's an imperative. It's a command. I mentioned earlier being submissive was a participle that borrows its imperatival force from a previous imperative. This is actually an imperative. It says, let her not adorn herself externally.

Now let her let her adornment not be external The word "merely," the adverb there is added to give the sense but it basically and I think that's right. He's saying he's not saying don't don't braid your hair, don't wear gold jewelry, and actually literally it says putting on dresses literally in the Greek says putting on clothes. So it says don't let your adornment be external, braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on clothes. Well, God knows you're going to put on clothes and you're going to wear jewelry and you're going to fix your hair. You're going to, in fact, you're supposed to. Read the Song of Solomon. Read the Old Testament. Feminine beauty is something celebrated. There's nothing wrong with having a new hairstyle. There's nothing wrong with wearing attractive clothing. There's nothing wrong with wearing jewelry. Not at all. That's fine. But he's saying don't let that be how you are adorning yourself for your husband. The focus is a wife should be dressing to please her husband, right? I mean, when you get married, the husband-wife relationship, the beauty of it, the woman should want to be beautiful to her husband and it's right for that. But he's saying, if you want to win your husband, don't just be worried about the outward adornment. Hey, what you've got to get busy doing is adorning yourself inwardly. You've got to beautify your soul, your heart. Make your heart beautiful. Cultivate the beauty of femininity as God intended it. Adorn yourself inwardly.

Think about how much trouble that we go to to take care of our bodies and it's guys and girls, right? I mean, you know, we get haircuts, you get hairstyles, hair coloring, you know, you buy jewelry, you buy clothing, and we're thankful for all those things. We're supposed to, and like I said, there's nothing wrong with that. God commends it as good. He made us this way. But if your focus is on the external, you're missing the point. Your focus needs to be 90% on the internal. Give that 10% to the external. Yes, you still need to do it. He's not looking for godly women who are walking around with hair all over the place and, "I'm godly. I don't care about my hair. I'm godly. Look at my nasty clothing. I'm just, you know, I'm a godly woman on the inside, though." You're not going to win anybody to the Lord, certainly not your husband, but no, I mean, that's foolish. But he's saying put all of your investment, all of your energy into beautifying your heart, the hidden man of the heart, the hidden person of the heart. Cultivate a gentle and quiet spirit, which is all rooted in the sovereignty of God. You know, God's in charge. You know he's at work in this, "I can trust him."

And I love, I'm going to unpack this a little more next time. I've got to say this before I close. When he says in verse 6, he talks about Sarah, we're gonna talk about that next

time but he says if you do right without being frightened by any fear, the last part of verse 6, you see that? You're her daughter if you do right without being frightened by any fear. What he's saying here is, listen, Sarah, it had to be frightening at times for Sarah to follow Abraham and it will be frightening for you to follow your husband. You will think it, and this is not saying that you're not, you're supposed to give your input. You're supposed to be his helper suitable. You're supposed to give all of your counsel. You're supposed to hope that he succeeds. Even this ungodly, wicked man who will not believe the gospel, you're supposed to offer all of that to him. "Honey, I really think this is what we should do. I really think you're missing something here, honey, but I'm going to follow you." And when he finally goes that way and he goes the wrong way and you're convinced he's going the wrong way and you're thinking, "Oh no, he's going off the cliff," don't be frightened with any fear because you know God is at work in this. And if you know that in the deepest part of your heart, you can follow him in a way that will just open up his heart. "She's following me. Look at this. How can she do that? Something is different about this woman. She's living life as it was meant to be lived. I need what she has."

This is how it works and that's what God thinks is most beautiful too. It's precious in the sight of God. I love that. He's saying feminine beauty is understanding that God has made a woman to be beautiful in ways that a man will never be, and part of that beauty, the essence of that beauty is a willingness to follow her husband in submissive trusting of the Lord confidence and that that is something gloriously beautiful. That is something that the world does not understand, and when someone sees that, it is powerful. It is powerful. That's the husband but listen, that's also for your children. Children see a Christian woman respecting and honoring an unchristian husband, those children, they're tempted to want to follow dad after his ungodly ways, aren't they? He stays home on Sundays. He doesn't go to church. "I like stay home," this is what this little kid's saying, right? "Mom makes me go to church. I can't wait till I can stay home with dad." He sees his mom living like that with dad and he sees dad and he sees mom and he sees mom and her godliness and dad and his ungodliness, his selfishness, and he sees mom trusting God and still honoring this man. He sees this message: you can trust Jesus. You can submit to God. It is the best place to live. It's the best place to be. He's going to follow mom, even if dad doesn't.

Evangelistic power of feminine beauty. We'll look again at that, Lord willing, next Sunday.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the glory of the gospel. We thank You for the high calling You've placed on each person who belongs to Jesus to live out the beauty of the gospel. We pray for Christian wives, Lord, to be able to live as Your Scripture calls, and particularly for those that are in marriages with unbelievers. Pour out grace upon them. Help us encourage one another in these areas to love and good works. And Father, help us all to respond to authority in a way that says that we know that God truly, the good

*news is that God reigns supreme over every affair of men. We pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen.*