

True Beauty

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Preacher: Benjamin Wilks

[0 : 00] Grab your Bibles, turn to 1 Peter chapter 2, and Betty is going to come and read for us, starting at verse 11, 1 Peter chapter 2. Thanks, Betty.

Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul.

Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Submit yourself, for the Lord's sake, to every human authority. Whether to the emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

For it is God's will that by doing good, you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.

[1 : 30] Live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers.

Fear God, honour the emperor. Emperor. Slaves, in reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.

But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

[2 : 57] He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.

When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds, you have been healed for you were like sheep going astray. But now, you have returned to the shepherd an overseer of your souls.

Wives, in the same way, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.

[4 : 17] when they see the purity and reverence of your lives, your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.

rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is of great worth in God's sight.

For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her Lord.

You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as a weaker partner and as their heirs with you of the gracious gift of life so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

[5 : 54] finally, all of you be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. on the contrary, repay evil with blessing because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing for whatever love, life and see good days. Must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good.

They must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. Amen. What is the route to marital bliss?

[7 : 23] It's an important question for many of us in our society, isn't it? Just look at the number of different articles on that subject in magazines aimed at both men and women. You can ask the psychologists, you can ask the sociologists, you can ask the agate aunts and the wise amongst us might even ask the couples who have actually been married for a number of years.

What is that secret? Probably not many people would go first to a theologian to ask that question. What is the route to marital bliss? And yet the Bible does speak about this topic.

Not an exhaustive answer. There is room for scientific work to be done. There is room for cultural difference. There is room for practical wisdom that comes from experience. But in various places the Bible talks about marriage.

God gives us his perspective on how men and women relate to one another in that situation. And we should listen to it. However, as we consider this topic, the first thing we need to realize is that that's not quite the right question.

The Bible doesn't necessarily see a happy marriage as the highest possible goal. Bliss is not the most important thing. When we look this morning at chapter 3 verses 1 to 7 of Peter's letter, he's talking here about marriage.

[8 : 44] And following what he says for us in these verses will be part of the recipe for marital harmony and happiness. But pause for a moment. Think about the context in which Peter is writing this.

Do you see in verse 1 and again in verse 7 we have the phrase in the same way. See Peter there in that phrase establishes a link with what's come before.

He's establishing a link back to the example of the suffering saviour that was there in what Betty read for us that we ended our consideration with last week. This is still the paradigm for what we're considering today about men and women in their marriages.

When we follow the example of a suffering saviour, when we're walking in the footsteps of the one who refused to retaliate when insults were hurled at him, when this is our model, then you can begin to see that maybe my personal sense of happiness is not priority number one.

And actually we find some different objectives, different purposes expressed in these verses and we'll come back to those as we go through. So as we think in these verses first about wives and then about husbands, I want to ask for each of those three clarifying questions.

[10 : 06] Questions that are going to help us understand what we're called to, whether as husbands, as wives, or indeed those of us who are neither of the above. We're asking twice over who, what, and why.

And so following the pattern that Peter has here, we'll think about wives first and ask first who? Who is Peter talking to? Which maybe sounds like a stupid question to ask because I've already told you we're thinking about wives and it's right there in the first word of the chapter.

We know who he's talking to but I think actually we can be a little bit more specific about that as to exactly who he has in mind. Last week we thought a little bit about the context in which Peter's writing in terms of Christianity as a new religion and therefore a cause of suspicion.

People wondering what this new religion is going to be like people not trusting these strange new ideas and particularly this suspicion of a new religion is going to cause friction and suspicion when there's division within a family isn't it?

When the husband has come to faith and the wife has not or slaves have come to faith but not their master or whatever situation it might be there is friction within the household as these faiths collide and clash suspicion of the new.

[11 : 30] And particularly here in these first six verses Peter seems to be thinking here about a situation where the wife has come to faith and her husband has not.

Do you see here we reckon that's what Peter is most directly addressing because he says in the second half of verse 1 if any of them do not believe the word. He's writing about a situation where wives might want to see their husbands converted therefore these husbands are not believers.

And this is the more difficult situation. It is a lot harder to be a Christian wife with a pagan husband than a Christian husband with a pagan wife at least then it was.

I don't know whether it's more difficult or not even today. But think about the context then and you can see that to be the wife in that situation is the more difficult scenario. because the assumption of the day is what the man says goes. The household follows the faith of the man of the house. Everybody has the same religion within this household and he decides what it is.

[12 : 37] So if he changes his faith then he can go ahead and do what he likes. If his wife comes to faith well she has a bit of a problem on her hands. This is the assumption of pretty much everybody in pretty much every culture at that time.

Your husband wants to follow the cult of the emperor. You live in Ephesus he's more focused on Artemis. Whichever are his favoured gods you fall in line. Maybe a generous husband will give you a degree of freedom.

You can go and worship another god too alongside but you will need to pay at least lip service to his gods because if you are not going along with the favoured religion of the town where you live well his business life is going to get tricky.

Suddenly there's suspicion people don't want to do business with him. Husbands expect their wives to go along with it and the same isn't true in reverse. So he's talking particularly to wives with unbelieving husbands.

However that doesn't mean that these verses are only relevant in that particular situation. I hope they are particularly helpful to those of you in exactly that situation but there are still valuable lessons here for other wives for women looking forward to marriage and indeed for the men too.

[13 : 55] There are lessons here for all of us. We do need to be a little bit careful in some of those slightly more kind of one step remove applications. But remember this is in that broader context of chapter 2 verse 13.

All believers are called to submit to proper authorities. And some commentators think the reason why Peter spends the bulk of his time in chapters 2 and 3 are on slaves and then on women with not a word at all for slave masters and only this very brief word to husbands that Peter spends his time here because these are the people kind of within the household who can serve as models of submission for wider application.

Peter focuses here because this is the model that can be taken up by others and used as principles for their own submission in other contexts. The wise husband would see his wife's attitude of submission or hear the submission to which she's called at least and think about the implications for situations where he too will be called to submit in different contexts.

So gentlemen, don't just switch off till we get to verse 7 at the end in the last few minutes, okay? Keep listening in the meantime. That's the who.

Next up, the what. What does Peter call the women in this situation to do? And I have a couple of subdivisions here. The second one is maybe kind of a subset of the first.

[15 : 29] Verse 1, Peter commands wives to submit to their own husbands. And verse 4, he tells them to seek the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. First up then, wives submit yourselves to your own husbands.

Your own husbands. Let's get that very clear at the outset. It is a nonsense when this verse or other similar verses in God's word are twisted into saying something that isn't what they say at all.

The Bible does not say women submit to men. It says wives submit to your own husbands.

There is no call for wives to submit to other people's husbands. And there is therefore no problem with women being head teachers, with male staff members, CEOs of large corporations, with big staffs working for them.

That verse does not have any application to that context. Wives submit to your own husbands. Limit.

[16 : 35] However, it does still say wives submit to your own husbands. It is still a direct command of Scripture and as we've established that isn't limited to the case where a husband is a Christian or where what you're being called to submit to is to your taste.

The application isn't only to the situation of a mixed marriage. Peter says if any of them do not believe. So it applies to marriages where a husband is a Christian and the wife is not.

It applies to marriages where the wife is a Christian and the husband is not. It applies to marriages where both are believers. And certainly even if Peter has this particular case in mind, Paul's writing in Ephesians has no such limit on its scope.

But what we do say is this submission that Peter's calling for is going to be more of a challenge and may also be greater in scope in that situation of a Christian wife with an unbelieving husband. He flags up, if you like, the most challenging situation to show what happens there and by inference the rest. When your faith is offensive to your husband, what do you do?

[17 : 55] You submit to him. This isn't a half-hearted submission, is it? This isn't a show of submission whilst doing whatever you can get away with as soon as his back is turned.

The implication here is this submission is sufficiently comprehensive to be noteworthy, to be visible, to be something that he will notice, even in this society that already expects submission from wives as a general rule.

what Peter's calling for is visibly noteworthy. So this isn't a pretend submission.

This isn't scheming away in the background to get your own way. This isn't manipulating your husband in private whilst giving a show of obedience in public. The submissive wife does not read the magazine articles on ten ways to get your husband to do what you want.

Now this is true submission. Of course there are limits. You know there will be, don't you? It's implicit in verse 2. Your husband's supposed to be able to look at you and see what?

[19 : 03] See the purity and reverence of your life. Now that implicitly rules out submission to something sinful, doesn't it? You can't call your life pure and reverent when what it actually is is corrupted and shameful.

Just following orders rapidly falls down once that line is crossed into a case of sin. And let us be absolutely clear. This is in no way a call to submit to abuse.

It pains me to say that this verse has been used in that way in the past with women sent back to horrific situations and told to go and submit. That is wrong.

That is wicked. The Bible doesn't countenance abuse of any kind within a marriage or anywhere else. The Bible does not countenance abuse. It's abhorrent.

It's wicked. And if you are in that kind of situation, statistics say maybe some of you might well be, some of you watching online, if you're in that situation then it is not wrong to get out of it.

[20 : 08] It is good to get out. And we want this to be a safe place in the midst of that. Covenant Church should be a refuge. So if you want to speak to me, to any of the elders, to any of the wise and mature women of the church, do so.

If that's something you need to do, you will have our support in the horror of that situation. The Bible does not countenance abuse. There are lines beyond which you do not submit.

There are limits. But, as last week, let's be wary of the temptation to multiply exceptions and excuses and reasons why the command doesn't apply in this situation.

If you are planning to refuse to submit, then it really should be because it is contrary to the will of God for you to obey, that it is a sinful course of action for you to follow.

I say we'll come to the why in a minute, but I hope I can show you there some of the attractiveness of this kind of life. So, hold on for that. But first, let's consider the second part of the what.

[21 : 18] Verses three and four, your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

Various attempts have been made through the years to link the specific things that Peter speaks against, to link those to the worship of particular pagan deities.

But these attempts are pretty unconvincing, not least because they all fall down when it comes to clothes. Because Peter doesn't actually write fine clothes as we have it in the NIV, he just says clothes.

Now, the wearing of clothes is not linked to any particular cult, is it? clothes. And the fact that he writes clothes also makes it somewhat bizarre that at various times people have forbidden the wearing of gold specifically whilst accepting any amount of silver, and forbidden the braiding of hair, that would be the more literal translation of elaborate hairstyles.

That people have forbidden these specific things, and yet nobody thinks Peter is forbidding the wearing of clothes, do they? To take it in that kind of narrow, literalistic way is to miss the point entirely.

[22 : 41] It is surely an excess of adornment against which he speaks, hence the NIV's fine clothes, elaborate hairstyles. The point is in the contrast, isn't it?

We've encountered this before, haven't we, together? Times where the Bible says not A but B, where today we'd probably be more likely to write more B than A, more in the beauty of a quiet and gentle spirit than in the outward adornment.

So this isn't a prohibition of beauty and adornment. Ed Clowney points out the prodigal son. Folks, he's welcomed home with the finest robe and a ring on his finger.

It is not wrong to have outward adornment of some kind. The priest's garments in Exodus. These are not simple clothes that are given to God's own priests.

But the contrast is still real, isn't it? And the contrast is just as current today as it was then, if not more so. Do you know, the clothing market globally is worth \$1.5 trillion per year.

[23 : 56] That's a colossal amount of money, isn't it? Hairstyles only get more elaborate. Jewelry. In this day and age, we could well add cosmetic surgery to Peter's list, couldn't we?

The allure is real. The contrast is real. Clowney again, he says enslavement to fashion by men or women runs counter to growth in spiritual holiness.

Focus on this outward adornment distracts from, pulls you away from, is in some sense antithetical to growing in holiness.

You could put it alongside the call for modesty in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 9. That's implicit here as well, isn't it? The hair, the jewelry, the clothes, they're designed to draw attention. And modesty, yes, is about the amount of skin on show, but it's also about the amount of wealth on show, isn't it? There's also issues of Christian stewardship, the wise use of our money. Maybe it would be profitable for some of us to look at the amount spent in a given year on clothes and jewelry and at the hairdressers and compare that to the amount given to the church and to other charitable causes.

[25 : 15] Might be worth a look. And in place of this outward adornment, Peter commends something better. He doesn't just say, do away with that.

No, he offers something more attractive. Instead, verse 4, focus on inner beauty, true beauty, the beauty that does not fade. However much you dress it up in fine clothes, the beauty of the body does fade, says Peter.

But unfading is the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. This gentle, this quiet spirit is linked, isn't it, to the call to submit above.

There's something commendable about gentleness, something attractive about a refusal to demand one's own way, about a decision not to insist on one's own rights, a decision to submit to the will of another.

And those of you who do cultivate this gentleness, let me assure you, you will be in good company as you do say. Because this adjective here described gentle comes up three other times in the New Testament.

[26 : 27] All of them are in Matthew's Gospel. One, the first beatitude, the meek who will inherit the earth, meek, gentle. And the other two are both descriptions of Jesus. Jesus who comes meek and riding on a donkey.

And Jesus who says in Matthew 11, 29, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

That gentleness comes in good company, doesn't it? And if that's a valid description of Jesus, then gentleness doesn't rule out expressing opinions and emotions, does it?

It doesn't rule out sometimes doing so quite vigorously, but still with that gentle and quiet spirit within. I can think of people who exhibit this character.

And I hope you can think of them too. I hope you can think of examples here in this room right now, examples in your life of people who are like this.

[27 : 33] Well, learn from them. Watch them imitate their unfading beauty. And for those of us in the happy position of being married to such a woman, well, appreciate this beauty.

A wife of noble character who can find. She is worth far more than rubies. Third question. Why? Why do this? Why would you want to submit to your husband? Why would you want to seek this true beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit? Three reasons. One, you are following the example of Christ in submission and in gentleness, and that is always a good place to be.

I could say more about this, but we've already talked about it last week and a little bit now, and you want your lunch sometime today. So, you know, if you're following Jesus, then like him, you will not cling to privilege, but seek opportunities to willingly submit yourself to a life of service.

Why one? And then two more reasons specifically from these verses. Do you see verse one? If any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives. [28 : 41] If you love your unbelieving husband, then surely this is a pretty powerful motivation, isn't it? Because their failure to believe the word, which results in disobedience to the word, has eternal consequences for them.

And Peter says there is at least a chance that your submission in that situation could have an impact. There's a parallel here, isn't there, to verse 12 of the previous chapter.

The desire for those who see your good deeds to glorify God on the day he visits us. For Peter, a wife submitting to her husband is one example of those kind of good lives that he's commending. In this case, lived among the pagans, lived amongst the pagans in your own household. And I don't think it's a stretch to continue this beyond the wife with the unbelieving husband, to see this extended to other family members, unbelieving children, to a lesser degree to the world beyond your household.

That there should be something compelling and winsome about submission done right, about a refusal to demand. I don't mean being a doormat who never has an opinion.

[29 : 55] I don't think many in our culture would find that an attractive witness, would they? But the gentle and quiet spirit that does not demand that can and should be a beautiful thing.

But the husband here in this scenario that Peter's thinking about, he's going to be forced to say, well, maybe she does refuse to come to me with the temple of Zeus, but in every other respect, I cannot fault her.

That's what Peter's aiming for. There's a little bit in this verse, though, that sits quite uncomfortably for me. What of this idea that the husband is going to be won without words?

Doesn't feel quite in line with the rest of Scripture, does it? And for a variety of reasons, I don't think that what this is commending is never speaking to your unbelieving husbands or other family members about the gospel.

I don't think it is saying aim to do it without words. Because Romans 10, 17 is quite clear. Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

[31 : 01] And similarly, earlier in this same letter, Peter's clear, it is the word of the Lord that endures forever. And the people to whom he writes, well, they believe because the word was preached to them. So here in 3.1, these unbelieving husbands, they're said to not believe the word.

And arguably, the word Peter uses is more about obedience than intellectual belief. So think there's a subtle implication that they know, the word that they're refusing to believe, refusing to obey.

Now, the source of that knowledge of the word is an open question, but that the wife had some role in that knowledge seems quite a reasonable supposition. I don't think Peter is commending a wordless approach as the ideal in every situation.

It almost rings more as a backup plan, doesn't it? As a last resort, as a reassurance to the wife in that situation where her husband refuses to listen.

In the situation where the gospel has been expressed, and actually to keep laboring the point risks indifference at best and actively raising barriers and increasing antipathy at worst.

[32 : 10] In that situation where words will not avail, well, Peter offers the reassurance that your actions can still speak, that God can use your deeds as an eloquent sermon.

witness. This may be an extended application to other situations where words are unavailable, where words seem to have been exhausted. Folks, if your workplace bans you from sharing your faith on work time, well, maybe you will seek opportunities outside work to speak to your colleagues.

But I think you can also take to heart the idea that God can use the witness of your attitude and your actions for his purposes, that your willingness to submit to your employer, your willingness to go the extra mile when it will profit you not at all, that there is an opportunity for witness there in this same model.

Called to a life of submission in order that some might come to glorify God. Third verse four, this gentle and quiet spirit. Why the gentle and quiet spirit?

It's there at the end of the verse. This is of great worth in God's sight. This isn't a new idea. Is it to prize inner beauty over the externals? And I don't only mean 1 Samuel 16, 7.

[33 : 27] The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. Not only that in the Old Testament, but it's a tenet of

plenty of contemporary philosophies too.

The internal rather than the external. So some argue Peter's kind of adopting this pagan morality for the benefit of the watching world, to make Christianity credible in the eyes of society.

And he does want it to be that. He does want that credibility. But this final phrase shows us that can't be the only motivation, can it? And that means we don't get to dismiss these things as an accommodation to the age in which Peter wrote, that we in our 21st century enlightenment can surpass.

Because Peter brings it back to the example of Jesus. And because Peter explicitly tells us that these attitudes and approaches are pleasing to God. And what once pleased God still pleases him today.

He doesn't change his mind. His character doesn't alter down through the centuries. So what Peter describes, this attitude here, is something that God values highly.

[34 : 36] All right, verse seven, husbands. Don't worry, Peter's only giving the husbands one verse. He's less interested in the powerful figures of his day. And I will try to be similarly brief. But it does seem that he wants to offer at least one or two cautions.

That when he said to the women that that doesn't for one moment countenance men seeking to enforce submission. No, he's exhorting the women to offer it freely.

And here he makes very clear the attitude he expects of the men in the church as well. So in terms of the who, we're talking to the men of the church. Peter doesn't think he can, you know, address those unbelieving husbands and expect to be heard.

No, he's talking to the men in the church. Doubtless many who are married in the Lord and these husbands must not take liberties. But the slightly more interesting question in terms of the who is not the identity of the man but the identity of the woman in verse seven.

Because the word your is supplied for a smooth translation. And the same word means either wife or woman or even more generically female.

[35 : 41] Now, translating this verse as the woman is not going to come across very positively in contemporary English. But it's linguistically valid and I think it's contextually appropriate to see this applied to any women with whom he might live.

Maybe multiple wives in some scenarios but also the widowed mother-in-law who's moved into his household. The sister who hasn't yet remarried after her divorce. Even his daughters to at least some extent.

The application I think is broader than we might think. So what? Peter says he's to live considerably. Live according to knowledge. Treat her with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.

Do you see how shocking that is? I mean we're not so amazed today by the idea that the woman is a co-heir are we rather than just the heir of last resort on an equal footing with a man.

But it's shocking then. Women don't have that kind of inheritance rights. We're not surprised by the idea of a man being called to respect his wife but it was pretty radical then. But think about it for a minute.

[36 : 57] Peter's called wives to submit to their own husbands. But here he says those wives are worthy of respect. Here he says they are co-heirs of grace. In other words Peter says women are fully fledged citizens of God's kingdom.

Do not ever let anyone tell you otherwise. Don't accept a situation that implies otherwise. A system that leaves you feeling like a second rate member of the church or worse feeling second rate in God's eyes.

That system has something wrong with it. And if it's something here making you feel that way well we need to look at it. Because either we need to change that or we need to at least better explain why things are where they are.

So tell me. Speak to one of the other elders. And if it's something in another situation you don't have to put up with it there either ladies. Change it or get out if you have to. You are not second rate in God's eyes by any stretch of the imagination.

imagination. But what we see here is that this call to submission is not incompatible with equality.

[38 : 08] Men are told here to recognize women as equal partners as heirs with us of the gracious gift of life as precious in God's sight whilst also calling the wives to submit.

So ladies when Peter tells you to submit this is not a diminishing of your value importance dignity or honor. The respect that the husbands are to give verse 7 that's the same word as the honor due to the emperor back in verse 17 of the previous chapter.

Jesus at least in his earthly life he submitted to others didn't he? He was subject to the authority of his parents. He submitted to the will of God the Father. And we do not on that basis say that he was even during his time on earth that he was of any less value, dignity or honor than his father.

We certainly don't say he was lesser than his parents do we? So to submit to another is not a value judgment. The Greco-Roman philosophers of the day they're very keen on the wives submitting to their husbands but they say these women should submit because they are inferior, because they are of lesser value.

Peter does not say that. Peter says quite the reverse. Peter says you are co-heirs of grace and submitting from that place of inherent equality is very different to submitting because you are lesser by nature.

[39 : 36] Anyway, this was supposed to be for the men, wasn't it? Men, treat your wives with respect. Be considerate. There's a lot that flows out from these very simple words, isn't there?

Just as from Paul's instruction to love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. If you are going to be considerate, you will at the very least need to know her needs and desires, which will require some listening, which will require some attention, which will require some time.

It will require placing a premium on those needs and desires. If you're going to honor and respect, that will have massive implications for how you speak of your wife and how you speak to your wife. Because respectful words might conceivably correct and even rebuke, but they will never demean. Respectful words will never seek to wound.

Honor and respect means affirming the excellent qualities of your wife to others, even when she's not there to hear you do it. Which brings us to the why.

[40 : 39] Last clause of verse seven, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. How do we get there from here?

This isn't just hindered as in slightly diminished. This is hindered as in thwarted. Your prayers are of no avail. See, we want to compartmentalize, don't we?

I have my spiritual life over here, and I have everything else over here. And this doesn't really have any impact on that. No. Peter says you must do these things because otherwise your prayers will be ineffective.

You must live considerately with your wife because otherwise God will not listen to you. I mean, that's what makes prayer ineffective, right? When God chooses not to listen, when God is displeased with you.

One commentator very bluntly says men who transfer cultural notions about the superiority of men over women into the Christian community lose their ability to communicate with God.

[41 : 46] You ignore what God says in 1 Peter 3 7 and God will ignore you. So you cannot possibly claim to be spiritual if you are neglecting your wife.

Your spiritual life does not get a higher priority than your marriage, does not get set above treating your wife with honour. It doesn't work. I don't know what you are doing in that scenario, but you aren't pleasing God and encouraging him to hear your prayers.

folks on my desk in amongst the laptop and the iPad and all the technology, there are some things that still happen on a piece of paper. And sitting on a little stand right in view, there is a sheet with this is what's meant to happen this week.

This is roughly blocked out what will happen this morning, this afternoon. Rough blocks of what we should be doing right in front of my face so that hopefully I'll actually do it. The hardest thing to block in on that sheet and the thing most likely to be squeezed out if something else comes up.

Time with my wife, time with Joanna and the kids too and it's not right. And I doubt I'm the only one. Most of you probably aren't writing it down on a piece of paper. But think what gets squeezed.

[42 : 58] Think what you make time for. It's so easy to argue that something else is more important or at least more urgent. It's so easy to tell myself that what I'm planning to spend time on is more spiritual.

But Peter says if you're spending time in prayer to the extent that you're failing to respect your wife you are wasting your time because God's not listening anyway. Now gentlemen maybe you are

prone to fail to honor your wife in different ways.

Maybe it is your words that lack respect. Maybe it's the demands that you place on her explicitly or implicitly that imply that she exists to do your bidding.

For me I think it's time first and foremost. It's not right. It hinders our prayers. It dishonors our wives. It dishonors God. May he have mercy upon us.

Let's pray. Amen. Lord Jesus we thank you for your words to us this morning.

[44 : 07] We thank you for it when it is hard to hear when it says things that we do not want to do. When it sets before us a pattern that we do not think we can live up to.

That we know we will fail. Lord Jesus thank you that there is mercy and grace. Help us to hear these hear these commands and seek to obey seek to serve you seek to honor you in our obedience to what you have said.

To do so from a place of confidence in what you have done for us. Of your mercy and your grace. Forgive us where we have failed and equip us for that which you call us to we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.