

Barriers to OUR Submission

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[0 : 01] How great is our God, so worthy to be praised. Please turn with me to Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5 as we continue our series entitled Family Matters. Family Matters. Just a couple of things that I want to have you think about, pray about.

I know during this time, obviously Christmas is a great reminder, but let's pray for one another. Let's pray for each other's families, the intricacies that are there, to be mindful of where others are.

I am very well aware that everybody has a different history, different understanding in regards to certain things, different habits, different traditions.

But I pray just through this time that we would be focusing on God's Word, what He says in regards to some of these things.

[1 : 10] And from a personal note, and I mentioned this last Sunday, these are areas that I want to go through pretty slowly. And I know a lot of questions come out, and I want to be careful in that you would be attentive to the words that I say and not assume words that I haven't said.

Because there will be a time to address certain issues, and I encourage you, if any of you have more and more questions, feel free to email them in. There's a lot of different areas where I'm going to take a little bit of time out.

Today will be one of them on one issue. But today I want to focus in on one verse. I want to focus in on verse 21.

And we spoke about this a little bit last week, but I want to drill down on this verse. But I want to drill down on the area of submission and the barriers that we have to submission.

Now, I want you to pay attention to the word I just used. I used the word we, both men and women.

And as Paul is talking about this idea of mutual submission, Ephesians 5.21 simply reads, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[2 : 36] So we see that Paul is attaching the idea of reverence, of submission to having a reverence for Christ.

So just on that note, I want to just begin preaching this subject just as we come to this text. Dear O Heavenly Father, I just pray that you would give us ears to hear, my mouth to speak.

Give us hearts that are attentive, Father. That we would hear your spirit poking and perhaps prodding in us.

As we understand our goal in this life is to bring glory to you, O Lord. And a big part of us bringing glory to you is seeing you glorified in us.

As we become more, as we become more like you. So dear Lord, I just pray that your power would be in these words.

[3 : 45] And the ideas from your word would be spoken today. We ask these things in your name.

Amen. Amen. One of the things that has been most interesting to me is now that I have been married for six years, I've actually got the opportunity or the chance to watch movies that, for lack of a better word, that women like watching.

From romantic comedies to romance movies to period classical movies.

These were never too high on my list before when I was single. But now that I'm married and I get to watch what my wife likes to watch, she's introduced me.

And some of these movies really stand out. There's movies such as Little Women, Pride and Prejudice, and Sense and Sensibilities. And these are these classical timepieces.

And what's interesting looking or watching these movies, and I know there's books on them, but I'm certainly not going to take the time to read the books. But they're periods from the 1800s.

[5 : 02] And what really comes through is there is an idea of marriage that is communicated to us.

We see in the lives of these people that are intertwined in all these movies that there is a desirability for marriage. There is an accepted premise that there is a goodness for marriage.

And they admit that there is stability found in marriage. And we see, if you watch any of those movies, they struggle. Is it love supposed to be the prime mover?

Or is it physical security to have a home? Financial security? Sometimes it's status in life. But they understood that marriage was a covenant that you entered into for mutual love, lifelong devotion, in order to have children to carry on your name, for protection, for stability.

And it was seen to be not only advantageous for the individual, but marriage is presented as a way that is advantageous to society and for the greater family at large.

[6 : 30] Well, things... When I grew up thinking about marriage with some of my friends, we did not think of marriage in those terms.

In case you don't know, I grew up in a church much like ours. Just about the same amount of people, people from different generations. We did many of the same ministries.

It was certainly a gospel-centered church. And we got to know people over long periods of time as you grew up in that church. And one of the blessings that I had is there was a lot of friends, other boys my age who I befriended.

And there was probably about seven or eight of us in that age group. And of course, we would talk about relationship and marriages. And we'd all act like we were experts, even though the deepest relationship we had with a girl was waving hi to her on a bus or something like that.

But we all had this one big aspiration, right? Our wives were going to be beautiful, and they were going to be inspiring. In fact, they were going to be the kind of people that we would not need anybody else, that we could live up in the Arctic Circle and be away from everyone else.

[7 : 42] But if we had that one perfect woman with us, everything would be okay. We never used the word soulmate, but we did use the word the one, as if there was one type of person that would meet our every needs.

Now, what is interesting, when I look back, I don't remember a single one of my friends saying, I want a marriage like my parents.

Nobody, nobody ever said that. Nobody stated that they wanted a marriage like their parents. We talked about how we wanted excitement.

We wanted a sense of fulfillment. In essence, we wanted a marriage that served us, and obviously we did not think our parents were living very exciting or fulfilling marriages.

So why would we want a marriage like that? Now, what's interesting is when I look back, I see many of my friends' parents were great Hall of Fame parents.

[9 : 05] Several of them raised multiple children in a Christian environment. Some adopted children with special needs.

Some of them had special needs children of their own. Others had health issues.

They cared for extended family, parents and relatives in such a community way. And they were always very involved in church.

They selflessly served the church and community. And we were too stupid or blind to even notice.

Looking back now, I can't say that if I ask my friends, are they living that exciting, fulfilled life? For the most part, no. I know several of them have already divorced, gone through exceptionally tough times, but that those would be two words that they would not use to describe their marriage.

[10 : 17] Then I asked why. Why didn't we think properly about marriage? Our church taught us about the roles of marriage. Our church taught us about the attitudes of marriage.

There were certainly good models of marriage. But one of the things that I think that gets left out of teaching about marriage is the biblical purpose of marriage.

And often, when there's a vacuum of teaching that exists in the world, the culture teaches us.

And I'll repeat that. When there is a vacuum of teaching in the church, the culture will enter in and teach us the values of marriage.

And this is the first barrier that I see to biblical submission in the marriage is that we allow the culture to define the marriage rather than God and His eternal Word.

[11 : 41] Last week, we spoke about the foundational aspects that we as Christians are to take into marriage. Let's be honest. Marriage is hard. Marriage is tough. It is. Why? Because not only do I have to deal with my sin, I've got to deal with the sin of my spouse.

I've got my own background, my issues. You know, in my case, my wife. In some other cases, we all have either a husband or wife. There's always different histories, backgrounds. And we all bring these things. And it's like a smorgasbord. And the Bible tells us there's a couple of things that really make this easy. One is salvation. It's understanding the gospel that we are freely accepted at the cross of Christ. It's number two, that we are to grow in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. He's working with us. And that as Christians, my third point last week, is that we are to be always people who are known to be humble and submissive people. [12:44] That is a characteristic of Christ that we are supposed to hold true. So without those things, I don't know how marriage survives.

But here, in Paul's teaching, we understand that God not only makes marriages, He's designed marriages, and God has a purpose for marriage. And that purpose is like everything else in this world. God's ultimate purpose for us is that our chief purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us, in 1 Corinthians 6.19, he says, We are now owned. The Bible uses the term bond servant, a slave to Christ. We've been bought, paid for, for the use of Christ.

[14:06] Later on, Paul would echo in 1 Corinthians 10.31, just a simple sentence. For whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, including marriage, do all for the glory of God.

Yet for some reasons, when we define marriage, we use terms of, it's for our happiness. We use the words, self of, I need to be personally fulfilled.

We want someone to love us just as I am and do as we please. Our culture teaches autonomy, freedom, and individual gratification are the highest heights that we can reach as individuals.

It tells us that love must be easy, natural. And if it isn't, something's wrong with it.

You never hear words like, the betterment of our community, the betterment of our society, and a betterment to the church. marriage. We've been taught to believe that our happiness in marriage equates to God's highest purpose for us.

[15:28] When I look back, my friends and I never use the terms marriage by reflecting God's love or producing godly character in us.

certainly we wanted to marry Christians, but we thought of it for us. When I thought back this past week, I realized, and I had to repent of in some ways, that I had given myself over when I was younger to some teachings of culture about marriage rather than what God's truth about marriage is.

I forgot that marriage was a covenant made before God, that it is a covenant before God's people. It's a covenant made before our families, and it is a covenant made before our community.

Yes, it is a celebration, but it is so much more. I believe in no other area is this seen more in our society's desire for destination weddings or personal vows.

Because a destination wedding puts the emphasis on a wedding, and it takes the people away from the confines upon which they will live in, the support that they need, the love that they need, the support that they need, and their personal vows rarely reflect deep doctrinal truths.

[17:08] So that's the first barrier, I believe, when it comes to submission, is that we have a cultural view rather than a biblical view. Now let's look back at the text here.

I want us to see in verses 22 to 25. It says, Now as the church submits to God, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Now for the moment, I want you to take the idea of roles out of your mind.

I want you to put it aside. We're not ready to deal with that yet. What I want us to look at is the actions that are a function of both of our roles in the process.

I want you to see here what Paul is asking for both the wife and the husband. A couple things. One, they're both very unique roles.

[18:37] They're unique roles. They are not the same roles. But the actions that are to be performed in each of these roles are very similar.

And the similarity is they're both a call to radical self-sacrifice. They are both called to radical self-sacrifice.

The love, the husband, as dying to Christ and the wife to place herself underneath her husband. Remember, we took a look at the word submission means.

It's a military term. It is to rank under. We're very familiar with military rankings. That means we are to serve the one who is ranked higher.

You see, we learned last week that as we become Christians, these are the defining terms to who we are to be in Christ, whether we're married or not.

[19 : 56] we are called to a radical life of self-sacrifice. Paul writes in Romans 15, verses 1 and 2.

He says, we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. Later on, in Romans, or Galatians 5.13, he says, for you were called to freedom, brothers.

Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. So here we have this predominant teaching of Christ, which is a radical call to self-sacrifice, self-denial.

[21 : 05] Just as Christians, it's no different in marriage. It's no different in marriage.

So that's why when we come to the first barrier of letting the culture define our marriages, the world's call is not to self-sacrifice. It's not to self-denial.

It's the exact opposite. It's take what you can, take what you want, fulfill yourself. So the first barrier we see in understanding biblical marriage when it comes to the actions of the roles we've been both assigned is that we have this culture that wars with us and it is a culture that is controlled by Satan. And I really believe we need to take a step back and we need to think about where are those areas where I've given myself over to a cultural understanding.

I'm not saying we do it on purpose, but it seeps in attitudes from movies, books, TV shows, friends, at work. work. These are all influences that batter us each and every day.

[22 : 21] So that's the first barrier that comes to doing the actions is submitting, is not submitting to the culture. The second barrier that I see when it comes to the work in marriage is that we are radically self-centered.

We are radically self-centered. Not only do we have a culture that wants us to be self-centered, to be self-centered, there is a heart that beats in my chest that longs only for its self-fulfillment.

It's the heart we've all had. 1 Corinthians 13, the famous love chapter. If you notice the teachings that occur in there, Paul is attempting to picture the exact opposite of self-centeredness.

Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way.

It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

[23 : 49] You see, it's attacking us at the very core of our heart. Now, the problem with self-centeredness is that it is so easily to see in others, but it's very difficult to see in our selves.

If I asked you right now, name five people who are self-centered, you know what? You could probably do it. And more than likely, your name's not on the list. We just don't think.

And you might think that you really aren't. But what I think is really interesting is that our self-centeredness usually comes out when we're with other people, especially other self-centered people.

You know those times, those feelings we get when we're not getting our way. We might become impatient. We might become irritable. We might demonstrate a lack of graciousness.

We might not be kind in our speech. speech. And what's interesting, we see this when our spouses or if we're single, our friends, or even when we're married, perhaps our parents, bring to bear our self-centeredness.

[25 : 17] We all of a sudden become kind of hypersensitive, right? We blame shift. We don't want to talk about it. We use emotional manipulative talk.

Well, you do it too. Sometimes we even get angry. We keep score. We hold grudges. We get bent out of shape easily.

Those are usually the characteristics of someone who is self-centered. someone who is cold and indifferent towards the issues of others, especially your spouses.

They obviously have challenges in life, but it's always your challenges that are greater than your spouse's challenges.

marriages. So that's the first type of self-centeredness that we have. The other type of self-centeredness that I see in marriages a lot, which is a little bit harder to spot, it's the people who hear this, like say right now, they hear this, but they start beginning to think, that's not me.

[26 : 39] You don't know how much I give. You do not know how much I love my friends, I love my spouse, I think of others all the time. Look at all the nice and wonderful things that I do for people.

I love them all the time. Don't get me wrong, loving others is really good, but what's really interesting is that how do you feel when someone else loves you back?

And I'm not talking about general terms of love. How do you feel when someone does something particularly loving for you or your family? When someone gives you a gift, do you feel that you have to go buy them a gift now?

Do you feel guilty because you can say, well, I really don't need that gift. I can buy it on my own. I haven't earned this. No, no, no. It's okay.

Okay. do you reject people serving you, blessing you with kindness, bringing over a meal for your family, or are you too embarrassed to admit that life has been so busy and crazy during this time that you haven't been able to keep everything together, that you actually need the help of others.

[28 : 08] If you can identify with some of these words that I've just spoken, you might have an issue with self-centeredness.

You see, one of the issues at the root of self-centeredness is a desire to control the situation. See, the reason you don't want people to bless you or give you gifts is because you're going to have this feeling of guilt that you owe them back, that you then in turn have to be thoughtful to them.

See, what happens is when we refuse the gift and blessings that people love us, acts of service, kindness, we're actually kind of robbing them of the blessing of serving us, of loving us.

To say, hey, only my love is good enough to give away, but nobody else's love is good enough to come to me. That is self-centeredness.

love is love is good enough to love. And one of the reasons we act the way we do is by giving away our gifts, our kindness, our works, it's a form of manipulation.

[29 : 37] We do so because it makes us feel good. It makes us feel content. It makes us feel so sometimes this wife may look like a wonderful, doting wife who serves her husband all the time, you might say that's loving.

Sometimes she does it out of guilt. Sometimes she does it because she feels she owes him. Or sometimes she does it because to control him because she knows if she does this, she can get that later on.

Those are all self-centered ways in which we act in marriages. There was this interesting situation happened at my friend's church that kind of brought out someone who was really self-centered.

They started off this ministry to help. They had a lot of seniors, a lot of seniors in their homes, a lot of widows, widowers, not able to do a lot of the work. A lot of people did construction in the church. They would go out, do all the work.

They'd put together estimates and do the work. And then the church leaders ended up finding out that a lot of the work wasn't getting done, wasn't done well. well. And it was getting backed up.

[30 : 49] A lot of emails, phone calls weren't being returned. What they found out is the guy who they put in the project, and when you met him, you'd think he's probably one of the nicest giving guys in the world, was actually doing all the work himself.

And the fact is, he was the worst handyman out of everybody who was involved in this ministry. And he wasn't also the best negotiator out of everyone in this group of men that they had in the church. But the fact of the matter is, he kept doing it because it made him feel really good. He really felt good doing that, even though that good wasn't always the best.

And what is interesting, when the pastor found out, they had asked him that he would just organize it and hand it over to those that could really do the work, he quit and never was a part of the ministry again.

It was hard for him to see that there was actually sin involved in his kindness, in what he thought was his act of love. love. And here's something I want to be really honest with you about.

[32 : 04] It's not a bad thing to have sin pointed out in our lives. It's not. And I say this knowing how tough it is when someone points out my sin or that people are aware of my sin that I haven't dealt with properly yet.

It's embarrassing. I feel shame and I want to run from this. But I have to take a step back when that happens because the reason I'm acting the way I am, I'm actually running away from the gospel. It means at that moment I'm not articulating the gospel truths which I so strongly preach and I so strongly believe in. And when we're involved in a home which is so intense, someone sees our warts and our ugliness and our sin more than anybody else.

I know there's issues in my life that have boiled up that I never thought were a part of my life just by being married. Just my own sin issues.

But there's no greater place for the gospel to shine than in our marriages.

[33 : 33] Because not only do we see our sin pointed out, we actually experience great forgiveness. You see, that is the core of the very gospel that we supposed to believe.

That we are to believe and understand that we are more sinful and more flawed than we can ever dare believe. Yet at the exact same time, we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.

We're more sinful than we believe, but we're loved more than we understand. You see, when we come to this type of understanding of what Jesus does for us, it helps us live this out in our marriages so much better.

One author simply writes, love without truth is sentimentality. It supports and affirms us, but keeps us in denial about our flaws.

Truth without love is harshness. It gives us information, but in such a way, we cannot really hear it. You see, God's love for us is marked with radical truthfulness, but there's also radical unconditional commitment to us associated with that love.

[35 : 14] You see, the love that's been given to us is not something we need to pay back. It's not something we need to feel ashamed of. It's not something we're to feel bad about.

You see, when we feel guilty, we want to do something to make it up. When it comes to the gospel and God's love for us, we can never make it up.

We can never make it up. It is too great and it's too big. We're so sinful. But we don't have to make it up because God is so loving.

He forgives us. It's done. It's in the past. And sometimes Satan attacks us using our past against us.

Whispers in our ears. You need to feel guilty. You need to make up. And yes, there is a part of making up when we hurt one another. Paul talks about this in Philemon.

[36 : 24] The idea of paying back the offense that we've hurt someone. But we're not trying to pay back for that love. Sometimes we just need to accept the love that is freely given to us.

To pay back God is like trying to empty the Pacific Ocean of water using a spoon. It can't be done. You see, at the core of self-centeredness, it will try to get you to earn love through works, perhaps money.

But it's really all about manipulating that person to meet your deeper needs. So the first barrier we see to, when I say the word submission, I'm not talking about it in verse 22 when we talk about the wives' role.

I'm talking about submission to the commands that God has given both husbands and wives.

Right? Radical actions of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

So we have our culture that is a barrier to us. And we have our sin of self-centeredness, which is a barrier to us.

[37 : 46] And I want to talk a little bit about the third barrier to our submitting to Christ in this way, is our wounds. Is our wounds.

And what I mean by this is, last one about our self-centeredness is the sins that we commit. This one is the sins that have committed, been committed against us that cause damage in our lives. The reality is, most of us at some degree have been mistreated in the past. And because of that, it's very hard for us to trust or to believe the best in people.

It's kind of interesting with our dog. There was a time something dropped off the kitchen counter and hit my dog.

All right? He's a little guy and he will not go anywhere near that counter. Okay? He comes in our kitchen a hundred times a day, but he won't go near that one counter.

[38 : 55] And it's only happened once. We've lived in the same house for going on close to three years. But he won't go near that counter. Nothing else has fallen on him.

But it's just ingrained in him not to do it because that was a place where he got hurt. Guess what? We're like the dog sometimes.

There's been a hurt or a pain that has hurt us and we don't want to go anywhere near it. We've been hurt by our parents, colleagues, people in our church.

When it comes to the idea of marriage, those relationships that we had with former boyfriends or girlfriends, for some of us, even former spouses, we've experienced hurt.

Now, a little segue. I'm not talking about physical or sexual abuse, stuff that is wickedly wrong. I'm not talking about that.

[40 : 00] I'm talking to people who demonstrated coldness to us. Perhaps indifferent to our love for them. People who were verbally abusive used emotional ways to manipulate us.

And sometimes we were just hurt because we were wrong, we were lied to, and we were betrayed. All those experiences make it incredibly difficult to trust another person, especially someone that we have to place above our needs, we have to radically love and radically self-sacrifice for.

How can I submit to them when they can damage me the way the last person did? Or how can I give my love to this person and just have them chew it up and throw it out like the last person did?

And sometimes those wounds get so big, we doubt our own judgment. So even with the person who's nothing like that situation, we doubt our judgment, we will experience self-doubt, we will experience guilt, even resentment and disillusionment to who that new person really is.

We bring these hurts into our marriages. What's interesting, in a normal marriage, when we sin against someone, we confess, we repent, and when someone confesses to us and asks us for forgiveness, we give it freely.

[41 : 56] We offer the grace that's been given to us. But for others, it's a struggle. It brings back past memories and hurts.

And even when we want to confess, we want to repent, we want to extend grace, we can't. It's like something's sabotaging us.

Even though we recognize it's right in here, this doesn't work. When that doesn't work, we get frustrated, we get angry, we express our pain with words, sometimes actions, we're certainly not trusting.

If this describes you, I want to give you hope. There's essentially two ways to deal with our woundedness.

There's the world's way and there's God's way, right? You didn't see that coming. But what's interesting is the world's way seems very appealing.

[43 : 13] The world tells you that you're really not that self-centered. That you have every right to protect yourself. The world will tell you that you lack self-esteem.

It will instruct you to do good things for yourself. That you need to start living for you. You need to start accomplishing your dreams.

And they will tell you to meet with people that support you and encourage you. And stop letting those bad people interfere with your life, ruin your life, whether it be a friend that's penetrated the boundaries or a mother, a father, or even your spouse.

And as I said, the reason they come at that with the premise that you really aren't that self-centered.

Others made you that way. They hurt you so bad you had to be self-centered in order to survive. I've heard some people ask me if this is pride.

[44 : 22] They just become kind of prideful as they look at their life. No one else has looked after me, so I have to do it. So what they're saying is that you started off as a selfless person, so the goal is get you back to that way of being selfless.

Can a marriage survive on that? No, honestly. How do you look after self while being self-sacrificing and living a life of self-denial?

Marriage is about two people being one flesh. And as soon as one starts living for themselves and then they insist the other person live for them, it rips it apart.

So it would be impossible to have a healthy marriage that does such a thing. We see it a little bit in this world.

Contractual obligations. I've got friends that will share with me that if I had a different career my wife would lead me because the way our careers run together it's really great.

[45 : 38] we have multiple kids but she's told me if I choose another career that's it I'm out the door. It's like a contractual obligations that as long as you're going my way you can come to.

And by the way I'm going to take from you as I go my way. But God offers a different way. God doesn't deny that we've been hurt hurt or that we've had people do bad things to us. But the biblical premise is we start off being self-centered. We already are. We have that indwelling sin.

It was interesting when I was in university as many of you know I used to run a residence when I was in university and you could always spot the first year students or not the first year students but within the first year students you could spot those who came from the homes where they were the only child.

It was easy. You could spot them all in the first week. One they were all about themselves and they weren't even trying to be. And I'd have to sit down conversations with some of the people.

[46 : 50] No you cannot play your stereo at 2 a.m. in the morning when your roommate is trying to sleep. I'm not kidding. There would be some of those life lessons that I'd have to sit down and explain to them that living with someone else isn't about you.

You see the biblical way starts with we are already self-absorbed and the woundedness is like piling gas pouring gas on a fire.

It just makes it more self-centered. And when we seek to be about our own case our way it's more gasoline being poured on this already raging fire.

So the world's way will ultimately lead to a disintegration of the relationship and in marriages we call it divorce. Right? It's just a horrible way to go.

So you have these wounds. What next? Now before I go any further I've had the question about what about people who've come from abusive relationships and I don't know if they're talking about physically abusive emotionally abusive or sexually abusive I want to tell you right now those are unacceptable.

[48 : 28] Those are unacceptable relationships. People who abuse you do not have the right to do so. In this text and people have used well the wife especially husbands have used this against wives you have to submit to me.

That's not what it's calling for. divorce. And I'm sometimes astounded about how the fear of divorce and separation what it might look like that some people will put almost their life at risk.

That's not something what God wants. I'm not saying that the end result is divorce but if you had heard me talk about one of the abuses in the complementarian position is the radical raising of the men's role that it supersedes both the church law and the law of the land.

And if you are being abused you need to report that to the police and you need to get to a place of safety. Your husband is in sin and it's calling you to follow him you need to speak to the church leadership.

And sometimes you have to remove yourself from that situation. I can tell you first hand stories of heart breaking counseling situations where the predominant the wife stayed in a situation that was completely damaging to her and to the children.

[50 : 08] And what's interesting is because there's a whole bunch of fear and we know that fear doesn't come from God it comes from Satan and Satan exploits that fear like nobody's business.

What will it look to my family my friends will be such a failure. All those kind of lies. Some people are wicked deceivers and liars and mean to hurt people.

In every situation later on when the children get out of the home very rarely have I seen the children have a positive image of either of the parent.

The one they recognize is the abuser but they also break the relationship with the one who allows the abuse to continue. It's horrible.

Now when I'm speaking about abuse the world today has kind of redefined that. I'm talking about real abuse. I'm not talking about well they make me feel guilty because I didn't make dinner tonight or they made me feel guilty because they pointed out my sin.

[51 : 28] Someone today will respond that way. I've been in situations where I've called in a mediation situation. Person A sinned against person B. I had to inform person A.

You need to confess and repent to person B. Their response to me was quit bullying me. Quit abusing me. I'm not. I'm just giving you what the Bible tells you you need to do in order to fix this relationship.

If you want to stay in communion with our church with our fellowship of believers this must take place. We also hear that thing you're making me feel guilty.

No one can actually make you feel guilty. It's not a feeling. You either are or you aren't. If you're doing something that's making you feel guilty, quit doing it. Repent. Confess. The gospel wants you. Jesus Christ wants you. He doesn't want to reject you. He doesn't want to tell you you're a bad person.

[52 : 32] Jesus actually wants to love you. Confess, repent, experience the freedom of forgiveness that only Jesus Christ can offer and have that friendship reconciled.

You see the problem is self-centered people when not walking with the spirit will make this accusation all the time. You're a bully. You're making me feel this way. But in fact they need to deal with their own issues.

I know I'm speaking more as a pastor right here. If this is going on and you suspect it, you need to come and talk to us as a church leadership.

If this is what you're experiencing, it could be you, it could be the other person, you need to come. Sometimes we need others to speak in those situations who understand God's word.

But I've seen situations where women have lived under horrible pain and men as well. Horribly abusive relationships that were not loving and certainly the wife wasn't following Christ and she was actually trying to destroy her husband.

[53 : 52] So my caution to you is if you have any concerns of what I said, talk to me. don't read in anything.

I'm not giving you permission for anything. But I'm just sharing with you what I have seen when people who are rejecting the work of the Spirit in their lives, this is how they will act.

So let's go back a little bit. So you've got these wounds. You don't want them to affect you anymore. what do you do? Well, it begins with getting back to the core of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 5.15, Paul writes, And Jesus died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Jesus died for you. enough to cover up all that shame and that sin and that guilt. And as I said, if you're in a place where people's causing you wounding, get out.

[55 : 09] But we're still called to forgive them, right? Matthew 22 verses 37, 39 says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. we have to realize that often our pain is not caused by the person we are with, but the person we came before.

David Nannery and I have just been discussing just as a little bit older, having dated, the first stage of dating when you're an adult is you have to pay for the sins of the guy the girl dated before you. It's a rite of passage. You have to go through it. You have to go through their warnings, their confusions, their pain. But we need to understand that self-centeredness doesn't come from abuse. It's already there and it's been aggravated by the abuse. And if they cannot see that it's already an existing condition, you're kind of in for an unhappy life.

[56 : 19] If you can't see your own sin, even how people have sinned against you, and if you keep going to their sin as an excuse for your sin, you're in a horrible position.

You have to deal with your sin. You have to deal with your unforgiving heart. You have to put these things before the Lord. Too often we cope with spouses that have those issues and we just don't deal with those things and sadly what it leads to is a rather cold marriage.

The ideal situation in a marriage, a husband and wife who've both been wounded, it's not treating one's greater than the other, but it's both coming to the agreement that they will not make excuses for their own self-centeredness.

That's where it begins. I'm not going to use my past, what someone's done against me, why woundedness, against my sin before you.

I'm actually going to be here to pray with you for you and you for me. You both agree that discipleship and accountability is the best way to manage this.

[57 : 46] As one long-serving pastor, I've been reading different pastors on this whole area, one simply says, if a couple can begin by saying, I am going to treat my self-centeredness as the main problem of my marriage, then things are looking up.

If you're familiar with the writings of Paul Tripp, he consistently says, it's not your spouse, it's not your spouse, it's not your spouse, it's you, it's you, it's you.

You have to deal with your response to them. Your sin is the problem. Now, if you're in a marriage to someone who is not a believer, who's not walking with the Lord, or who does not see their own self-centeredness, there is hope.

Okay? When we're in a solid marriage, we have the balance of someone's love towards us that encourages us.

It's the wind in our sails, so to speak. And when we don't have that, we feel like we're in a boat on a lake or an ocean to see with no wind in its sails.

[59 : 12] It goes nowhere. But the problem is, they were never the ones that were supposed to be blowing that sail, or providing the wind for that sail.

That power comes from the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit. And that is something that you can do before the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can come to Him and Him alone. You can confess that sin of self-centeredness. You have friends that want to walk with you in love so that you can be more like Christ.

Christ. Now that image of Christ, that may repel that person for a time. That person is truly saved. It might grate them, but it will eventually break them. Or her. That they will see the power of Jesus Christ being working out to you, will give them hope that their wounds can be healed as well.

[60 : 32] So yes, the best situation is two, but it can happen with one. By praying for the Lord to redeem your marriage, to work in your heart, to work towards your repentance.

Walking with Jesus with love, light, wisdom, and spirit. Right now, you can do that. You can go before the Father and submit to him.

Let the Holy Spirit fill you up. Either way, 2 Corinthians speaks specifically of even in an unbelieving situation that a husband can be blessed by his wife.

And I know a great many marriages where the husbands recognize and begin to love and trust their wives in ways they never did before.

Let's pray. There's a lot here, oh Father. The truth of the matter is your teaching gets right down to the core of our being.

[61 : 48] our pride doesn't even want us to admit that we're hurting or we've been wounded sometimes. And the reality is in all parts of our lives we're to submit to you, whether it be to the government, in the workplace, we pay our taxes, we have to submit to our leaders in the church.

And then I know people that just they fight everyone because of their woundedness. They don't trust they've been hurt.

I've known a great many people who've just walked away from the church because they felt that the church owed them something or hurt them. The reality is this church of yours is made up of imperfect people just like our marriages.

Father, I pray that as we grow closer to you we will see each other through your eyes that we will understand that we are indeed sinful creatures but we are indeed loved more than we can ever imagine.

It talks about fear, reverence, in this passage that we read today. That fear is to be a real fear.

[63 : 19] You are the God who created the heavens and the earth. You are not fooling around. You are not some mind-addled grandfather. But it's a healthy fear because we know that you love us and you care for us and you've designed a way of living that is best for us, that is best for the church.

It is best for our communities. It is best for this world. And as we're going to see, part of the submission act for both parties is submitting to the roles that God has called them to.

to the God's to the God's who are the ones where the husbands weren't willing to submit to God's call for their leadership at home.

God's God's I know too many exasperated lovely Christian women who are tired because their husband will not submit to the Lord to the role that's been designated to him.

Father, all of these roles, no matter for the husband or wife, are going to be hard, just like it is hard to live this Christian life, to not be self-seeking or self-serving.

[64 : 49] We are giving up rights, we are giving up what things we think we are rightfully do and in some ways we rightfully are. But in order to love and reflect, you who gave up everything, can be painful.

So Lord, I call for blessing, I call for healing upon us, I call for those in the church that have been wounded, I pray that they would feel the power in your healing, that they would begin to let you into

those areas, that you would bring a forgiving spirit, a healing spirit.
I pray that you would give us short minded minds against those people who have hurt us.
Let us forget those things. Let us move on. Father, we know and understand that you have great things for us and those great things are to glorify you with our lives.
Let's stop seeking to protect ourselves and project you. We ask you these things in your most gracious, your most loving and exceptionally powerful and understanding name, Jesus.
[66 : 24] In your name we praise. Amen.