

Crash Course to a Wonderful Family - Part 1

by David Servant

David Servant's sermon emphasizes the importance of biblical principles in strengthening family relationships and fostering hope and redemption.

Duration: 57:53

Scripture: Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18, Ephesians 5:25-33

Topics: "Marriage And Family", "Christian Relationships"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of understanding the divine order for relationships as laid out in the Word of God. It addresses the need for husbands and wives to work together as equal partners, with husbands loving their wives sacrificially and wives supporting their husbands. The sermon emphasizes the role of women as helpers and the significance of mutual respect and love in marriage. It encourages individuals to make adjustments in their relationships based on biblical principles for a harmonious and fulfilling family life.

Transcript

As we were coming this weekend, I think it was Diane who put a little bug into my ear that, boy, it'd be great to maybe just to do a little teaching on the family and strengthening the family and encouraging folks along the lines of the pattern that's laid out for us in the Word of God. The danger, a couple dangers in this, number one, we only got three sessions. This is a big topic to cover in three sessions, okay, so we're not going to cover everything.

Another danger is the fact that we all have some regrets. How many got regrets? Hold your hand up, put it up with me, please, everybody here, okay. We've all made mistakes.

That's what the gospel is kind of all about, right? You blow it and Jesus is in the redemption business. Sometimes when we talk about the family and the ideal that we're all striving after or like to experience, it reminds us of a very painful past when we didn't know these things and weren't able to apply these things because we were in darkness and it really brings out some scars that we really wish we could just forget about or somehow go back in time and change, and so it is my intention not in any way to make anybody feel badly about mistakes that we've made in the past, but to give hope and instruction to those who there's still hope for, you know, and if we're still breathing, there is still hope. Okay, and again, as I said, God's in the redemption business.

He can turn lousy stuff into good stuff and that's his specialty, okay? So, let's stay on the hopeful side and then lastly, I thought of another danger and that is that people who feel completely excluded, if you talk about raising kids, people that have already raised their kids say, well, that has no application to me. If you talk about marriage, single people say, well, you know, come on, not everybody's married. Why don't you say something that applies to me and so forth, and so we're just all going to have to kind of like go with the flow and walk in love, realizing that not everybody is just like you and there's other people here that have needs that maybe you don't have and maybe it'd be okay if you didn't get all your needs met, but someone else did get some of their needs met.

Can I have a better amen than that? I need a little confidence here. Okay, you know, our constant struggle is just a breakout of selfishness, you know, once and for all and just say, you know, I don't care about myself. I'm living to serve Jesus and therefore, I'm living to serve other people and so I'm happiest when they're blessed.

I'm not always looking for my blessing. In fact, really we're talking here Christianity 101. This is all about love, self-denial, self-sacrifice, finding our lives by losing them for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of Christ.

Okay, so that being said and also as I was kind of pondering about coming and teaching somewhat on the family, it has occurred to me and this is just a little history just to kind of set the stage for what I'll be saying and where I'm coming from. I was a pastor of institutional churches for about 20 years and I at different times of my course of pastoring ministry would teach a series on the family. In fact, I dug up all my old notes that I have and looked them over to see what I had to say and I just cannot help but remember how frustrated I was that very little of what I said had any impact and recognize and that's the reason I haven't taught on this kind of a subject for quite a few years since I left my last church as I've traveled around teaching around the world and teaching different places.

I haven't bothered to teach on this for this reason because I realize that there's a foundational fundamental truth that people are completely totally missing and they don't have that foundation laid. There's no sense on teaching them the further points. You know, if you've got a bunch of, you know, pigs wallowing in the mud and you're going to teach them, you know, how to properly hold their fork and their spoon when they eat at formal dinners, you know, you're probably like you're probably missing it somewhere.

You need to like say, let's get out of the mud here first of all and see if we can clean you up a little bit and then maybe we'll go on to the further things and oftentimes teaching on the family is just that way. It's really teaching goats sheep principles and, you know, goats aren't sheep and no sense in it. But if you get the foundation right, if you get the gospel right, if people really get born again, then a lot of this stuff just just falls in place naturally.

Nobody has to teach it. It just, you know, it's a no-brainer for you, you know, and so let me also not in any way insult you as I go through some of these things today and this afternoon and tomorrow. Please don't be insulted.

You know, if you already know some of the stuff and I hope you do, for goodness sake, I hope you do, but we can all improve. Can I have an amen on that? Okay, so nobody here is perfect yet, but don't think that I don't think you know these things. I'm just going to affirm and re-establish and rebuild maybe what has been neglected a little bit.

Okay, and am I some kind of expert? Do I have like the perfect marriage? Well, you know, my wife and I have been married for, just give me a second, we've been married for 28 years. It'll be 29 years in August. First rule, first thing to remember is don't ever forget how long you've been married, okay? So and, you know, have we had, you know, challenges and so forth at times in our marriage? Absolutely, sure we have, but we've grown, praise God, we've grown.

We got married, I was, I was 21. In fact, we got married on my 21st birthday. What do you know when you're 21? Very little do you know, you know, and that's, that's how, you know, God, God tricks us into getting married, I think, for that reason.

He wants us to grow, you know, because who in his right mind, in his right mind would ever get married? You think about that, I mean, you know, you're locking yourself into one person until you die, but, but God gets us into those situations and then he says, now, praise God, you know, now, now you're going to grow, now you're going to grow, and so we, we just, you know, we have, divorce is not a word that has ever entered our vocabulary. We've never considered that ever, you know, now murder, yes, but divorce, never have we considered that, and we, our commitment has held us through, and I can say, honestly, without any kind of hype whatsoever, more in love with my wife than I ever was in all the other years, and I cherish her much more, and appreciate her so much more, and it's been a blessing. Can I have an amen out there? Okay, and that's how it's supposed to be.

This is supposed to be a blessing. Okay, all right, so that, that, that's where we're going to go, and I'm going to ask you to turn to probably a but I'm going to make some observations in Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians chapter 5, and our basic premise is that, you know, when we talk about the family, I mean, it was God's idea, right? God is a father. He wanted to have some children, and we are, we are his children by virtue of the new birth and so forth, so we're a part of a huge family.

God knows what he's doing when it comes to family. If we will follow his divine order, we'll have his blessing. And again, I know that everybody knows that, but our world is in such darkness, and there's such a perversion out there of the truth, that it's a no wonder that the world is in such a mess.

I mean, it's just in a total mess. Why? Because people are not following God's divine order, and if we'd line up with God's word, that would eliminate sin completely. You know, can you imagine a world without sin? Well, imagine it, because it's going to, it's coming, folks.

It's not coming until Jesus is ruling the reign on Mount Zion, but the day is coming when there's going to be a new heaven, a new earth, and righteousness is going to dwell on that earth. Nobody's ever going to sin, and so everybody will be selfless. Everybody will be obedient.

Everybody will strive with all their heart to please God, because they'll love him with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and that's possible, though, right now, in a limited sense, for those who get in line with the program, and we are experiencing some of his kingdom right now, because he's ruling and reigning our life, because we've lined up. Now, y'all, all y'all, so I need to say that plural, all y'all have discovered some things just about the, you know, about the church, and, you know, it can be said different ways. Some people will say, well, you know, you're not a traditional church, and you might even nod your head in agreement, but then you thought, stop, I think you said, wait a second, no, no, no, we're the traditional church, because we're going back to the biblical tradition, right? You know, so we, you know, maybe they go back 1,700 years, but we go back 2,000.

How many have been blessed, and, you know, in that step of going back to closer to the tradition, the biblical tradition, that's why you're all here, for goodness sakes, you know, because there's blessing in it, okay. Now, don't ever think, oh, we've arrived. Think how stupid we all were for so long, and that means there's a possibility that we could still be stupid in some ways.

That's the worst part of being ignorant. You don't know you're ignorant, right? You know, and so we always need to be thinking, you know, and asking ourselves, well, you know, is there something I'm missing? You know, there are verses in the Bible that just don't make sense to me. Maybe somehow I'm still in darkness to some degree in some areas of my life, and I'm submitting to you that that is so true in Christians' lives when it comes to the family.

They have non-traditional patterns that they're following, because they're following the world's patterns, and they might even go back a hundred years and think they're doing pretty good because they discovered some things that they knew a hundred years ago, but I'm telling you, you do much better to go back to Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2, and the stuff that people could learn just from looking at those couple of chapters, it would revolutionize their lives. They're basic. They're fundamental.

Of course, they're counter-cultural, but if you do them, the blessing is like automatically there, okay? So I'm going to try to talk about some of those no-brainers, the things that are so obvious that most people are missing them, okay? And there is indeed a divine order that God wants us to follow, okay? So let's read these verses, and then we'll go back through them. I'm going to begin not in verse number 22, just to gain a little more context. I'm going to go back to verse number 21, even though we're breaking into the middle of a sentence here in Ephesians chapter 5. Paul said, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we believe, be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

I'm going to have an amen. Okay, so turn to the person beside you and say, I'm supposed to be subject to you in the fear of Christ. Everybody say it to everybody, okay? Now, you know, that might raise some eyebrows and questions, you know, but you understand, you know, that's in the Bible.

We just read it, and so when we talk about the subject of submission, we need to understand in the context of Scripture, we're all supposed to be submitted to one another. Does that mean that, well, what else can it mean other than that we just love each other, want to serve each other, put the other person first, not look out for my own interests, but also look out for the interests of others, right? This is basic Christianity 101, and it's done. What's the motivation behind it? He said right here, in the fear of Christ, because we're going to give an account one day.

We're going to stand before him one day and give an account. Did you do my commandments primarily? Did you love your brother and your sister? You know, it's just another way of saying it, be subject to one another. You should be easy to get along with, not argumentative, you know, always striving to bring peace into relationships, because God loves unity.

God loves love, but the legacy, of course, of Christianity is division, strife, you know. If I didn't have the Bible, I just got out of it completely by now. Just said, the heck with the whole thing.

It's just a farce because it's so far from, you know, what we're looking for. So, that's the context, then, of verse number 22, which this one, you know, is the one that always causes some people, not me, trouble. Whines? Be subject to your own husbands, as the Lord.

Now, may I point out, and we're going to come back to this, that the words *be subject* in my Bible, the New American Standard, are in italics, indicating that they were added, they're not even a part of the Greek. Not that it's wrong that they're there, because that's obviously the implication. But, you see, it's connected to verse number 21.

He didn't even say, *wife be subject*. He just said, *everybody be subject, everybody*, and here's a little thing you'll want to know also, *lives to your husbands as to Christ*. So, the *be subject* is not even there, but it is a reference to the *be subject* that was up in verse number 21.

Why? For the husband is the head of the wife, Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the savior of the body. Keep reading verse 24, but as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Then verse 25, husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her, so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in all of her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason, I was quoting from the Old Testament, from Genesis, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Finally in verse number 33, nevertheless each individual among you also is to love his own wife, even as himself, and the wife see to it that she respects her husband. Now, everybody's heard those verses probably hundreds of times and have different feelings about them.

I just want to point out a few observations and get you to observe these as well, just so we have a balanced understanding. First of all, there are words directed to wives and there are words directed to husbands. Correct, Amundo? How many verses are directed to wives and how many are directed to husbands? Well, I'm going to count.

The wives verses start in verse 22, it's verses 22, 23, and 24. How many is that? Good, good. Now the husband verses, they begin in verse 25 and how many other husband verses are there? 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and the first half of 33.

Right? Because verse 33 is, nevertheless each individual among you must also love his own wife, even as himself. So that's talking to husbands again. And then it's not till the second half 33, he comes back to saying something to the woman, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

And so, that being said, here's the ratio. It's three verses to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and a half, really technically three and a half to eight and a half. Point, what is the point? Well, Paul felt by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he ought to spend more time, almost three times the time, less than three times, but you know, between, you know, almost three times the time giving instruction to husbands and to wives.

Now I think that is significant. And it is my conviction, you can agree or disagree. I think this is indicative of the fact, and experience teaches us, that men need more teaching than women do on marriage.

I heard some high-pitched amens over here in the front. I believe that. Now, can you say amen to that? I heard a guy say, here's a guy who's a pastor who knows.

I really think they do. You know, if you just balance the, you know, put all the men on this side, put all the men on this side. Well, how about this? Everybody knows this.

Isn't it true that there are more women in the church than men? Okay, how about this? Can you find any example in the scripture of a woman who persecuted Christ? Well think, you can't. There's none. Can you find any examples of men who persecuted Christ? Holy schmooley.

You know, just, you know, take away, strip away everything, just in general, women are more Christ-like than men. I could psychoanalyze your laughing over here, but, yeah, yeah, I like you guys over here. You know, to be Christ-like is to be a servant.

Hello? You know, that's faith. I mean, the women are outdoing the men. Now again, I'm not just saying the men are all slobs and, you know, they're no good, they're good for nothing.

No, no, no, no. I'm just saying that, you know, going back to my original point, there's three times as much information here to the men as to the women, to the husbands and the wives, rather, and so I think that's indicative of something that, you know, the Holy Spirit said, I need to pound this into men a little bit more than I need to pound this into women. Just an observation, you know, if you reject it, just then, you know, I'm right and you're wrong, but it's okay if you reject this.

This is the truth. I was a pastor for 20 years, and if I was going to point my finger at marriages that were troubled, now sure, there's plenty of blame you can cast upon women and so forth, because the scripture addresses the wives' job, but yet I have to say that in my experience of counseling and dealing with marriages and so on and so forth, and just being married for 28 years, I'm going to have to say that, you know, most of the time, the man, you know, needs to get his act a little bit more together. Well, I'm trying to, you know, I don't want to be stoned.

Okay, so now, and I'm trying to, I'm just delicately walking here because, you know, I'm not like letting the women and the wives off the hook here. I'm just saying that, hey, you know, husband, well again, the whole analogy that Paul is portraying here is the whole thing, you know, wives should be submissive to their husbands as the church is to Christ, and he goes in this big long thing about how the marriage is a picture of the church's relationship with Christ, okay? Well, come on, folks. Now, I realize there's responsibility on the church to respond to Christ, but who is the one who initiated the relationship and paid the big price to make this thing work? It was Christ, you know, and why are we saved? Because he took upon him the responsibility to reconcile us to God, okay? So I think there's a connection there, that there's a huge burden on the shoulders of husbands that I need to take responsibility for my marriage, and I, you know, and quit trying to find what's wrong with my wife and point out what's wrong with what she's doing.

I need to look in the mirror and do an examination of myself. Not that women don't need to do that too, you know, but I'm just saying that I'm just giving an admonition here to men. Take responsibility, you know, and quit putting the blame somewhere else.

I think that, you know, in all the marriage counseling that I did, and thank God I don't do any marriage counseling anymore. But I often think to myself, you know, as I, you know, hear these stories as people, their marriages are being, are disintegrating, and I often think to myself, well, if you guys would just, you

know, take that finger of accusation that you're pointing to each other and realize that there's three fingers pointed back at you. And I, many times I'd want to say, I didn't say it, but I'd want to say if I was married to you, I'd be divorced a long time ago, buddy, you know.

You know, I want to say that, but you can't say that because that wouldn't be holy, so you're saying something else, you know. Oh man, now you're messing me up. I'm sorry.

You know, you know, the successful marriage, don't move away from him, stay close to him, Diane. The successful marriage is not so much as finding the right person, it's so much as being the right person. Amen.

Okay, so that would be, you know, just a kind of a starting place there. Now, I want to point out something this doesn't say, because this relates to what I'm trying to make a point here. This instruction to wives and to husbands, because these are direct instructions.

Verse 22 starts with wives, then he gives instructions. Verse 25, husbands, and he gives instructions. Notice that he did not say to wives, wives, make sure that your husband loves you like Christ loves the church.

And it didn't say, husbands, make sure your wife submits to you. And so husbands, it is not your job to make sure that she's submissive. And wives, it's not your job to make sure he loves you.

You got it all mixed up, but that's what you think. And that's so many times what I find. People say, well, the problem is she's not doing what, you know, what the Bible says.

You're not submitting to me. Well, you're not loving me as Christ loves the church. And again, I'm waiting for you to make the move so that I can easily respond.

You know, and all the blame, and you know, this will be great whenever you change. If you'd only change, you just do what the Bible says. I found over the years, whenever I'd bring up that verse to my wife and say, honey, you know, the Bible does say, you know, submit, you know, that never got me any points at all.

It never got me any closer to the goal. But I did find this, I'm getting, you know, after 29 years, we're getting a little bit smarter. I did find that the more I love her, well, then I'm not so concerned about her being easy to get along with and submitting and so forth.

Well, she just, she just responds. Amen. And so instead of, you know, looking at the other person, just look in the mirror and say, what can we do to fix this? Because this needs some fixing.

Amen. Okay. So don't ever say to your wife, woman, I'm the head, you know, oh, then that's like, that does not, take it from me.

It does not work. Now you're the head, you're a pinhead. Knucklehead.

Okay. Yeah. But same thing.

You're not very smart. That head you got is not so, okay. So you're the head, you know, and when, and the same thing when she says, well, you're not loving me like Christ loves the church.

You know, I mean, yeah, you know, that's not the way to, to, to get him motivated to love you like Christ loves the church. You know, you know, who wants to love somebody that's griping and complaining at you and telling you, you better love me. You know, how do you respond to that? You better love me.

Love me, love me, love me. Oh, you know, what's there to love? Nothing loving about that. You know, give me someone to love and then I will love.

Let's see something that's, you know, uh, you know, cause me to be a lovable and then I'll love you. Okay. So again, you know, what Paul is saying is there's a, Hey, Hey, don't be looking at what they should do.

Look at what you should be doing. You do your part, whether they never do their part, but I guarantee you, if you do your part, there's a much better chance they're going to do their part. You know? Okay.

Now, a lot of people think that just because of the changing roles of men and women in our culture and so forth, women's liberation and all that, that now suddenly, you know, these scriptures have greater relevance. I don't believe that at all. I believe that when Paul wrote these, they had relevance to marriage relationships back then.

It was, it's always been the same old thing. People get out of God's divine order. There's a scripture and I wish I had studied this more and maybe one of you guys will come up with it real quick.

It's one of those difficult passages where Paul says, you know, I don't allow a woman to teach a man and so forth. And he gives, he appeals to divine order. And then he says, for the woman, you know, was deceived and so forth.

And I think that that scripture, my personal vision is that has really been abused and taken way beyond its intended meaning. And I just like to go back to the beginning. And my conviction on it is simply that, is that Paul is not saying that women are more easily deceived than men.

I don't believe that because there's more women in the church worldwide than there are men. And so from that standpoint, there's more men who are deceived than women. Okay.

But I think what he's saying is, hey, the whole reason they got into trouble is because their marriage was out of order. The divine order was not as it should have been. We got a woman here who's not submissive to her husband.

He told, clearly he told her what God said about that tree. She may have misheard him a little bit, but she, you know, she should have said, if Eve would have been submissive to what her husband said, she would not have eaten from the tree. Come on women.

Yeah. She'd have listened to him. And again, you know, we don't know all the details of the story, but the point is something was wrong there.

She's talking to the devil and he's making a suggestion and she's, she's got a choice. Can I listen to what my husband has told me or listen to what you told me? And my husband has heard from God. And so I ought to be listening to him, but she listens to the devil and that, you know, that was the beginning of the end.

Okay. And so again, that's a prime example. If our marriages are according to the divine order, then we're just going to have God's blessing.

And I don't believe that, you know, there's no way that anyone could rightfully take these verses we've just read and say that gives a man a right to like dominate his wife and, you know, tell her she can't ever leave the house and treat her like a doormat. Come on. There's no way these scriptures are saying that.

People have used these scriptures to justify that kind of thing, but it's giving clear instructions to husbands the kind of tender care and love that they ought to show to their wives. And that you'll be happiest when your wife is happy. So do everything you can to make her happy.

Okay. But, but, but, but, you know, still there's this divine order. And in any time there's a group of people, you know, let's say for example, back in your old days, when you had church committees, well, we still have this to some degree, you've got churches and you've got elders who are overseeing the churches.

You know, that any kind of a human structure where people are going to join together for a common cause, there has to be some leadership. Even when they, even when you get a committee together under the guise of all these equal people having equal input, the very first thing you do is you elect a chairperson of the committee. Because you recognize unless we have somebody who's given us some direction here, taking us along, helping us to stay focused, but we can wind up, you know, just accomplishing nothing.

We need someone to take us in the right direction. Yeah, that person is open to the input of the rest of the group. Yes, this person is not a dictator, but we must have a leader.

So we, first thing we do, elect the chairperson of the committee. It's the same thing in a husband and wife relationship. You know, somebody has to be the head of that relationship, not the spiritual head.

Christ is the spiritual head. We're all supposed to be submitted to him, right? But yet in the affairs of life and the, you know, the domestic setting, somebody has to be, just like in a church, you know, we all believe in the, you know, the equality of the believers. We're all members of his body.

We all have gifts, functions, but still, does that eliminate the need for leadership? Absolutely not. You've got to have, and the Bible prescribes, you've got to have elders, pastors, overseers helping every single individual unit. Isn't that correct? Sure, some people, just to take a little side journey here, you know, they're into the house church thing, but they've totally eliminated all leadership because they've got such a bad taste in their mouth about pastors.

They said, well, we'll have none of that and we'll all be equal. Well, I guarantee you, even if in theory they say that, somebody rises up in every group who is a more dominant, I should not use the word, a more leader type person who takes some direction and gently leads that flock, right? Even those who discount that and say, we don't have that, you have it. Okay, and so the problem in marriages so many times is that, just that very fundamental fact, is that there's no clear leader, you know, and again, I think culture has been prescribing, you know, a lot of nonsense to us and so forth, and so men become more wimpish all the time and they're not men, they're wimps.

They're not leaders, they're just, you know, a little milk toast, you know, nothing to respect about them, you know, something's wrong. So men need to rise up and realize, I've got a God-given role here in my family, that is to lovingly lead my family on the narrow road that leads to eternal life. And if you're a godly wife, well, that's the kind of person you want to follow and to have lead you and your children into the will of God.

Okay, so hopefully that puts it in a good perspective. Now, here I made a little notation. I want to read these verses again to you.

Verse 25, listen to this now. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church, gave himself up for her. So there it is.

How do you love your wife? You give yourself up for her. You want to serve her. You want to be a blessing to her.

So that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. So here's what I wrote in my notes.

Husbands, when you love your wife, you make her beautiful. That's what makes her beautiful. She just blossoms under that love that you shower upon her because she is secure and safe and knows that she's important in your life.

And that just brings out the best in her. And that works in any relationship, doesn't it? I heard a story some years ago. I don't remember where I heard it, but this very bitter woman came to a psychologist or some kind of a counselor, paying him for his advice.

And she told her story. Briefly put, she said, I'm just sick and tired of my rat-fink husband. And I'm, you know, I'm set.

I'm going to divorce this bum. And, but I want your advice. I hate this jerk.

And he has hurt me so badly. You know, he's just put me through so much pain. I want your advice as to what I can do to really hurt him to kind of get revenge, you know? And so that when I tell him that I filed for divorce, you know, it crushes him because I just, you know, I want to get my pound of flesh.

And he said to her, well, and I don't know if he really fully knew what he was doing, but he said, well, I'll tell you what to do. Don't tell him you're divorcing him yet. Wait about two months and just serve him as a perfect servant.

Wait on him hand and foot. Make sure his every need is fulfilled. I mean, just that way, when you divorce him, it'll kill him because he's losing such a wonderful thing.

You know, so that's how to hurt a man. You know, this will kill him. Just serve him everything you can possibly to make him regret it when you divorce him, that he's losing a good thing.

Because now you've been a lot of fighting and so forth and a lot of turmoil in your marriage. If you divorce him now, he might sigh a sigh of relief. If you really want to hurt the guy, you got to let him know he's going to miss out on something.

So she said, great plan. Thank you. Story goes on and he sees her, the counselor sees her, I think three or four months later, somewhere just in public and said, Hey, I wanted to hear how the plan worked.

You know, how's life like now being single and free and, you know, released from that rat, fake husband you told me about. And she says, what do you mean? Rat, fake husband. I'm married to the greatest guy

in the world.

And, uh, you know, he asked her, well, what happened? And of course you probably already figured out what happened when she started loving and serving. Well, he began responding and all that hurt was healed in both of them and their marriage, they reconciled and, and they found that, uh, you know, love, love carried them through, you know? And so what's the lesson there? Well, the lesson is, you know, again, I'll keep saying the same thing over and over again. Don't be looking at the other person, look at yourself and say, well, how can I change? How can I contribute to this relationship and make it right? You know, when, uh, when my wife and I, now we've never had an argument, but we've had some intense discussions over the years and, and, uh, intense fellowship.

Sometimes our kids will come in the room and say, are you guys having intense fellowship right now? I think I heard some intense fellowship. I said, yes, we're not arguing, we're having intense fellowship. And at times, now this has been quite a while, but at times in our early marriage, I can remember, you know, really being upset and, you know, the sleeping on the couch thing or something like that, where you just stop talking because you've reached the, you know, loggerheads.

And, uh, you know, I'm thinking all the things that she needs to, you know, how could she say that? And I'm sure she's thinking the same way, but my wife is a much better Christian than I am. And historically she's always been the one who comes and apologizes to me. Now she could come with, you know, greater guns.

That's how I operate. I'm like, as, as, as we were, you know, not speaking to each other, I'd be formatting my plan, getting ammunition, you know, ready for whatever, whatever she might say. I've already got anticipated how I'm going to counteract that argument with what I'm going to say, you know, and I'm just building, building, building, building, just waiting for her when she's going to come at me with something, you know, and she'd come at me and say, I'm just so sorry.

I just want to apologize to you because I've been wrong. And I had no answer prepared. I was utterly prepared.

She completely disarmed me just like that. And I found myself saying, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. It was really my fault.

I mean, my whole thing just immediately changed. She disarmed me and changed my heart just by taking the initiative and taking the blame. Even when looking back in retrospect, I was more to blame than she was, but she was the better believer, the better follower of Christ, and she brought that healing, you know, and it's kind of like judo, you know, when, in judo, when someone attacks you, you use their own weight against them and just pull them right through and they flip on the ground, you know, it's just that way.

Love is that way. When you love people that are expecting to not be loved, it just totally throws them off balance and all they can do is respond in love because it's hard to hate people that love you. So hard.

If someone does something kind for you, you just naturally have this inclination, I need to respond in kind. I always hated it when I was a pastor, you know, when someone in my church would anonymously give me money because then I'd have to be nice to everybody. Who was that? Who was that? Because you think, I don't want to make a mistake and like not be nice to the person who maybe just, you know, slipped me that \$100 bill in a, you know, in an envelope or something, you know, you got to be nice to everybody

then, but I'm just saying that that's how love is.

When someone loves you, you respond in love. You know, I just wonder sometimes if our, if we, if we spent all the money we spend on hating people, like as a government, if we'd spend that same money on loving people, if we might make more progress, you know, I'm not here to make some political statement, all I'm saying is that, boy, you know, we spent a lot of money that, man, if we spent it on, you know, feeding people and clothing people and so forth, I wonder if maybe they would appreciate us more and we'd have less trouble. Well, I'm not the president, so I'm sure the president would get in trouble if he came up in front of Congress and said, you know, we all need to follow what Jesus said here, you know, and start loving our enemies.

I don't think that would go over too big. Okay. Paul also said, as we kept reading here, husbands pay close attention.

Verse 28, so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. Well, husbands, let that sink in.

When you love your wife, you're loving yourself. If you don't love your wife, you're not taking care of yourself, okay, and so that's really a way to be selfish. Love your wife.

It's just love, just like loving yourself, okay. I can say that, and again, I've been married for 28 years and been learning and growing over the years. I'm so thankful for my wife, Becky, and I just want to say this and go on record for saying it because I've changed because of my wife, and I think she could say the same thing.

Maybe we'll give her a chance to get up here and talk, but I've changed for the better because of my wife. Because she has stood by me when no one else has stood by me. She's supported me when no one else supported me.

She's been an encouragement, you know, and always been there and stuck by me through thick and through thin, and I've grown as a follower of Christ and as a human being because of her contribution, and she hasn't done it by nagging me, you know, you need to change. You know what the Bible says about that nagging woman, better to live on the corner of a roof or something or other like that, you know, live with a house with a nagging, no, no, no. My wife has changed me by love, by reinforcing what is good in me that she wants to see come out and blossom even more.

Hallelujah. Back in the days when I used to wear ties, I was never good at like mixing, getting the color combinations right. I'm still very fearful about that, but when you have a tie, it's supposed to match, you know, and sometimes I would pick out a tie that was just, you know, obviously a huge blunder, and to go to church with that tie would cause, you know, people to wonder about my abilities to choose ties and so forth, and so I learned to ask my wife, honey, how does this tie look? And, you know, she could have said, you are such an idiot when it comes to matching clothing.

I just can't even believe, you must be blind as a bat to think that that tie goes with that shirt or that suit, you know, but she would always say, honey, you're much too good looking to wear that tie with that shirt. And I look in the mirror and say, you know, you're right about that. What do you suggest, you know? And she would pick out one for me, you know, and, you know, but it just was a good feeling.

I didn't ever hesitate to ask her her opinion because I knew that she's going to love me even if my opinion was stupid, and she had some insight that I didn't have. And I remember hearing a story years ago. This was one of the pretty well-known mayors of our city of Pittsburgh, Pete Flaherty, and he and his wife were walking through the streets of Pittsburgh one time, and walking past a little construction site, and there was a man in a manhole, and he took his head up, and he saw Pete Flaherty's wife, and he looked at her, and he said, hey, hi, I forget what her name was, and she responded in a kind of, hey, hey, you know, how you doing? And they obviously knew each other from the past, and chatted a little bit, made small talk, and then they walked on, Pete Flaherty, this is the mayor of Pittsburgh, and as they're walking along, Pete says to her, who was that? She goes, that was my old high school sweetheart.

So now he was naturally very interested in this guy, and he began thinking, and he said to her, in that song, he said, if you'd have married that guy, you'd be married to a sewage worker. And she said, no I wouldn't, I'd be married to the mayor of Pittsburgh. Now, isn't that a great answer? No, I'd be married to the mayor of Pittsburgh, because I, you know, you know, I kind of put him in his place too, you know, like, you know, like, you're taking all the credit, but I have raised you up from the dust, buddy, you know, and, you know, yeah, yeah.

Okay, so I think that's a great example to try to follow, you know, let's see what I can make of this person I'm married to, how I can help change them, and make them more Christ-like, and that we can enhance our relationship. Okay, now, I don't want to go too long here, I'm just going to go a few more minutes. Can we turn our Bibles to Genesis chapter 1, and let's go to a couple other things here now.

Now, this is going back to the real traditions here, okay folks, and again, I've been kind of gauging you to see if you're willing to swallow what I'm giving you so far, and it seems like it's going pretty good. This is a good group, real sheep. What seems to always be the trouble in the whole concept of teaching about Christian relationship, and marriage, and so forth, is the, is the role of husband and wife, and I, and actually, I'm not even sure we need to read these scriptures, because we've read them so many times, we know the story, we know that God created man, men, the male species first, correcto mundo? Okay, and Paul appeals to that whole thing, you know, as far as the divine order, that helps us understand some of the divine order, and then he created the woman from the man, okay, and there's divine order there, that tells us something about the relationship, but before we go into that, take a look in Genesis chapter 1, to look at God's original intent, before he had created any human beings, you know, was the man to be the dominant slave owner, and the woman to be the doorman? Well, verse 26, then God said, let us make man in our image.

Now, right then, you think about the fact he always talked about the male species, but no, no, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps near it. Now, if you didn't read any further, you might be thinking, oh, God's not talking about Adam, he's talking about all the male species, those are the rulers, those are the guys ruling over the fish, and the fowl, and all that kind of stuff, but you read the next verse, and suddenly your theory is blown out of the water, because it says God created man, there's that word again, in his own image, in the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them, so suddenly now the word man comes to have a dual meaning, it doesn't mean male species, it means humankind, and he's talking about male and female, and all these things, they are to be ruling over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle, the earth, and over everything, so already we're seeing some degree of equality there, can I dare say that word?

Some equality, okay, so I'm just trying to bring a good balanced biblical perspective, that is not allowing anyone to hold on to some, you know, supposedly biblical idea of having a woman way down here at my feet, no, no, no, you know, right from the start, God has a divine plan, and then to further add to the argument, verse 28, God blessed them, and God said to them, be free, he's talking to both the males and females, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth, okay, and then God again speaks to them, we don't have to go into that, but verses 29 and verse 30, and it all finishes out, God saw that it was good, okay, so that's the foundation, but then we quickly see that there's more to the story, because we get more detail in chapter 2, the idea that the male species was created first, and then the woman came from the man, but a lot of interesting stuff flows out of there, verse number 7 of chapter 2, then the Lord God formed man from the dust from the ground, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being, then the Lord God planted a garden toward the east in Eden, and there he placed a man whom he had formed, so now we got a guy, a lone guy, a lonely guy, okay, and we skip over some of these other verses about some of the minerals in the ground, and so forth, and the rivers, and God says in verse 18, then the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him, King James says, help meet, and a lot of times, this is my help meet, no, that's, you're making a noun, a noun, an adjective into a noun, no, no, a helper suitable for him, someone who's going to come up, why, because the current condition is not good, and we got to make it good, and how we're going to make it good, is we're going to produce something that's good, that's going to make this good, now, years ago, when I said to my wife, hey, and I was just kind of joking around, as we were just bantering a little bit, I said, you know, it's very clear men are superior to women, because men was created first, woman was created to be the helper of the men, and Becky said, no, that doesn't prove that men are superior, that proves that men needed help, and I could not find an argument to that, and so I just shut up at that point in time, and it has occurred to me, that just because God creates someone to be a helper, there's no implication at all of inferiority, isn't the Holy Spirit our helper?

Well, you're going to say the Holy Spirit's inferior to us? Are you kidding me? He's God, God the Spirit, okay, and so, you know, in no way, you know, is that saying, well, there's some kind of inferiority to women, because they're created to be the helper of men, but let's not, again, throw it all out, no, there is a role there, get this, help, now, man needs help, it's not good for him to be alone, but still, wives are there to help, help, and all those men are saying, help, we need help, Amanda, we need help, and what was the answer?

And you read the story, I've always scratched my head, I never figured this one out, all these years, you know, I've heard people teach on, I think, well, that sounds, what else could it be, but it just sounds so goofy, but, you know, God makes a statement, it's not good for him to be alone, then he creates all these animals, and brings them up, you know, and the last verse is, there wasn't a suitable helper, you think God was serious? You know, Adam, here's a gorilla, how would you like to be hooked up with this for the rest of your life, you know, and here's an alligator, you know, here's a vulture, you know, there's a snake, what do you think?

How's it look to you, Adam, you know, so the implication is, the implication is, we're looking for the solution to the problem, and we're bringing all these animals, and again, these animals are domesticated, and they also became helpers, you got an ox, and now that helps you to plow, but, you know, hard to find a lot of fulfillment in that relationship, you know, yeah, yeah, okay, so then, again, it's in your Bible, right, deep sleep, takes the side, forms this woman, brings this woman to him, and again, the implication is, all these

other possibilities, you know, they didn't work, but we found what works here now, we found the perfect helper, and all I can think of, again, maybe you think of something better than I can think of, you know, than this, I, again, I have a hard time

believing God was even serious, that these animals weren't even a consideration at all to be the helper of man, and aren't you glad that Adam didn't, like, settle for one of them, can you imagine, you know, a planet of all men, and, you know, and a whole, and an equal number of ox, oxen, you know, and that was our existence, oh my goodness, it's like a nightmare, I always said, you know, remember those promise keepers meetings, and so forth, you know, and you go to those meetings, and that's, it's, they were the ugliest meetings they ever had, because it's all men, he's looking, he's looked, thousands of men, this is so ugly, what are we doing, we need some women, you know, oh my goodness, you know, and so there he brings her, and I don't know, all I can think of is that God was just

trying to impregnate something into Adam's brain to say, he could always say, you know what, there were a lot of possibilities, but, oh, I'm so glad he didn't settle everything else, and look what God did for me, and this is the perfect helper, this is the, this is my other half, this is, this is what completes me, and now, praise God, oh, praise God, mm-hmm, okay, and it was good, amen, I always joke, I'm going to close on this now, I don't know, but, you know, he named her woman, because she was taken out of man, the Bible says, but I always imagined that when he, after looking at alligators, and snakes, and rhinoceroses, and giraffes, and you know, just, you know, you know, goats, and so forth, and then all of a sudden, here comes this woman, and he said, whoo, man, every time from

thereafter, when he saw her, it was, whoo, man, and eventually, he just kind of became woman, that's my personal theory, you won't learn that in Bible school anywhere, probably, isn't it such a sad thing, though, that, whoo, man, has changed to woman, yeah, should never be, yeah, woman, where's my, where's my slippers, come on, no, no, you need a whoo, man, thank you, David, that's right, all right, so now, this afternoon, I'm going to talk, I'm going to look at that story, and I'm going to just, you look at what I'm going to call the no-brainers, but there's nothing more uncommon than common sense, it seems, and look at the no-brainers of the order, the whole order, divine order of that relationship that God established, and again, compared to the perversions of our culture, and try to

encourage all of us, not condemn us, but encourage all of us, just consider those no-brainers, and then make application to our lives, and make the adjustments that need to be made, okay, I'm sure many of us have made adjustments over the years, and this will affirm you that you're on the right track, even though that you're flowing against the current of the world, others are beginning to make some changes, others need to make some changes, and so forth, and so hopefully, you know, it'll be a blessing, and a help to you in some way, shape, or form, if you say, well, you know, I'm, you know, I'm been married for many, many, many years, well, you could teach somebody else this, a lot of you guys are leaders, you're destined to be leaders, you're destined to be church planters, and so

forth, these are the kind of things that when people come out of the world, you know, you need to help them with these kind of basics, and help them with their marriages, because if this is all about the family of God, folks, which is what it's all about, if we haven't got our individual family act together, we're not any use to the family of God in a wider sense, okay, so the individual domestic family is a microcosm of what's supposed to be the big family of God, the loving, the, you know, the submissiveness, and the care, and so forth, and so let's start at home, grow from there.

Father in heaven, thank you so very much, we just, we just want to thank you, Lord, for, for your truth, we think, Lord, of how much the world is in darkness, the whole world lies in darkness, and how you brought us out of the darkness, into your glorious light, to walk in the truth, Lord, I do pray that in our this afternoon session, and our tomorrow meeting, Lord God, that you'll continue to help us come out of the darkness, if there's anything that we're ignorant of, there's any way that we could tweak something, if there's something that we need to be reminded of in our relationships, and with our husbands, our wives, or as single people, in relationships with other single people, or with anybody within the church, it all has application, any application, Lord, to the raising of children, or whatever, I pray that you'd bring that to the surface, so that we could know the truth, and we'd be set free by it, as we walk in the light of your will, hallelujah, and so we give you the praise, and the honor, and the glory, in Jesus' lovely name, and everybody said, amen, okay, praise the Lord, brother Terrell, I'll turn it back over to you.

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