

The Transcribed Sermon of 7/31/2016 by Brian Fuller of East Brandywine Baptist Church, East Brandywine, PA. Audio file from *sermonaudio.com*. Transcription and notes (in gray text) by Tim Zuponic.

For the last six years I have cited the great deficiency in the church's pulpit regarding balanced, Biblical teaching on men's and women's roles and predispositions in the marriage. Over the past 50 years the overwhelming majority of sermons, books, and other writings emphasize Ephesians 5 to the exclusion of other scripture that speaks to the husband's and wife's predispositions and their positions in the relationship. And if that were not bad enough, the ideology of secular humanism also permeates these teachings.

Particular to this sermon, I've included my comments in gray colored text. I'm sure there is much more that can be said. My intent is to point out how absent of scripture Brian Fuller's teaching is and the sloppiness in his presentation –patterns I've seen across other authors and pastors, particularly on this topic.

Gender Roles at Home

1.35 Ephesians 5 is where we're going to be at again, what we read in our call to worship this morning. We're in a little miniseries this summer on *Different by Design* and this morning's topic is Gender Roles at Home. Next week we'll deal with Gender Roles in the Church. As a 8 or 9 year old boy there were a couple shows frequented in our watching and our viewing. There were some we weren't allowed to watch so we would find places where we could watch them. One of them was Wonder Woman. My brother and I were not allowed to watch that with our parents around but my Grandma was more than willing to allow us to watch it there. [Is this really a good example for the young people in our church? –that the pastor circumvented his parent's authority?] I have to confess that I watched it on more than one occasion. I knew exactly what time it came on in the mid-week program schedule. If you recall of the little opening tune I still remember it: "You are in your satin tights fighting for your rights, in the old red, white and blue." You might even have that tune going on in your mind. I didn't know at the time, though, that Wonder Woman was actually invented as a comic originally by a man who also invented and created the lie-detector. He was a psychologist who – his whole goal was to make some recommendations to comic artists and writers. They actually brought him it and said 'How can we connect more with the young people? What do you think we need to do? Well, after assessing all of the comics that were out there, he said, 'There's something missing. You have all this violence and blood curling male characters. You need a female character.' From that was birthed Wonder Woman. Now, Linda Carter probably didn't know that she was going to play the part of something else that this creator of Wonder Woman was very qualified for. He studied mythology. So he was very

familiar with a goddess of fertility called Diana. Now that goddess of fertility called Diana, you may recall, actually is what was happening in Ephesus at the time that Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians. [Why does Brian feel the need to use a worldly, sensual character to set up the context of the book of Ephesians? It is not even a good set-up. He seems to have gone out of his way with his story to make what turns out to be a very weak connection. Pastors make this mistake regularly. They weave into their sermons worldly stories that detract from the Word of God, the Holiness of God.] So Paul knew something about Wonder Woman, even before the time. Diana, this Greek coastal city in Asia Minor, Ephesus, had a large temple to Artamaeus. It was also supposed to be a celebration of the Greek goddess of fertility, Diana. You recall, perhaps, that they had made all of these little idols. They created a pretty incredible industry in selling these little figurines. As these figurines were sold, the Gospel came into Ephesus and they were not happy because people stopped buying these little figurines. They were instead burning them! Those that were creating and profiting from this industry weren't very happy, as you can imagine. So Paul is going to write the Ephesian Christians about home rules and how life and the Gospel ought to be lived out at home in a culture that is very familiar celebrating the goddess of fertility, Diana, in a very wicked way in the temple to Artamaeus, right there in the coastal city of Ephesus.

So this was very counter-cultural, even in this day. I want us to understand that what seemed very, like it kind of has some dust on it culturally, in our culture –understand that this was counter-culture even when it was written to those who were living in the city of Ephesus. [Brian is sheepishly justifying the stand he is about to take in the

lesson. Why does he feel the need to do this repeatedly? I believe Brian, and many pastors today, take an apologetic stand because they are succumbing to the cultural bullies of the day –the pressure to place women on a pedestal that is counter to the Bible. This bullying is evident in our media (television, print, web, movies, etc.), learning institutions (Christian and secular), and in the workplace.] Now, intentionally this morning I read something –I started our reading in verse 18 rather than in verse 22. One of those reasons was because I didn’t want to start a scripture reading with “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.” I didn’t think that was a great way to start our day together. [Again, overly sensitive and apologetic. Why call attention to this other than to pander to cultural pressure. This pandering and apologetic stance compromises the efficacy of the Word. It down-plays what scripture emphasizes in multiple passages. He’s implicitly signaling to women that their submission is not important.] But the other, more important theological reason was that I want you to understand that when the church of Ephesus received this letter, they didn’t receive it in chapters and verses. It wasn’t divided up like that. It was one long scroll and it would be read in the public hearing of all of those. They didn’t get to take it home, they didn’t study it or memorize it, they didn’t get to read commentators on it. They just got the one scroll read to them in public. They would perhaps take notes and they would go home and talk about it and discuss it. But it was one flow. It was one letter. It wasn’t divided up like we divide it up in neat little chapters and verses today –you can have one supplement one week and then we have another easy installment the following Sunday. That isn’t how they received it. [Good point, but this is true of all the epistles. Why is Brian making such a point of it today? On one hand, he is couching today’s sermon, but on the other, he’s not explaining in any detail how this relates to today’s message.] So, the Ephesians were hearing this letter and they hear chapter one, which comes before chapter five, (that was deep) and they read chapter 2 and chapter 3 and they understand that this wonderful plan of reconciling all things to Christ, to God through Christ, is what’s happening in the church is that wonderful testament of how God is reconciling all things to Himself. I mean, Greeks and Jews are getting along! This is an amazing thing. We’re told in chapter 3 that the angels and demons are looking down on this with surprise! But when you come to chapter 5, this isn’t a new topic. It’s continuing the same topic, and verse 18 is

going to say that it’s going to be impossible for us to live out these home rules without being filled with the spirit. I want you to notice again in verse 18, before we begin our reading, because this is so important. In fact, this is *impossible* for any couple, any family unit in our hearing this morning to fulfill these home rules –we call them the home table rules– without being filled with the Spirit. I want that to be our theme this morning. [Be filled with the Spirit as the theme? I have not a problem with that, but the title of this sermon is “Gender Roles at Home.” Is this a sleight of hand? As the sermon will play out, Brian does not deliver on the title. He talks of “home table rules”, but doesn’t provide them. He falls back on a generality that charismatics are guilty of: “be filled with the Spirit”. Who can argue with that? On the other hand, what does that really mean? He has a great opportunity to explain in a practical and Biblical way what “Gender Roles at Home” means, what it looks like, and how it plays out in what the man and the woman do and say.] I don’t want us to approach this as our little checklist. Okay? Wife has her checklist, husband has his checklist, and everybody will be happy. That is not how its laid out. This is not a moralistic checklist that people need to try to keep. This is what a home looks like when daddy and mommy, or husband and wife, are filled with the spirit.

You know, you hear about ‘What is a dysfunctional home?’ You may say, ‘I grew up in one.’ You may say, ‘I’m presently living in one.’ What makes a dysfunctional home? Well, let’s ask another question, ‘What makes a Christian home?’ For too long, here’s what some people think. They think a Christian home is made up of two Christians. So if you have two professing believers . . . waalaa . . . you have a Christian home. Most of us that lived in homes with two Christians understand that’s not the case. In fact, you can have two Christians, you can have three Christians, you can have a bunch of Christians in a home and it still not be a real Christian home. Because what makes a Christian home is not that you have multiple Christians living under the same roof. What makes a Christian home is you have multiple people walking in the power of the Spirit living out the Christian life, the Christ life, right there under the same roof. What does that look like? So here’s what we want to say: Be Filled with the Spirit. Can you say that with me? Be Filled with the Spirit. That’s our theme this morning. So if you thought, ‘We’re going to get a checklist about what men are supposed to do, what women are supposed to do,’ I hope you leave very disappointed. Because that is not at all what the

scriptures teach. They don't give us this nice little checklist. [I don't understand this presumption that we are looking for a checklist. Pastors must be careful about the presumptions they make about their audience. When pastors have a pattern of making presumptions about their audience, they run the risk of isolating the audience if the presumptions are not applicable.

To the contrary, Scripture is specific as to how the woman is to conduct herself before her husband. Scripture is specific in requiring her submission. Scripture requires the husband to love his wife. It would have benefited the audience for Brian to use the "checklist" that Scripture provides in highlighting the obligations that the man and woman have to each other. Instead, he obfuscates Scripture's teaching with, "be filled with the Spirit." They give us this very clear command. You and I, if we're believers in Jesus Christ, are supposed to be filled with Spirit. Now, if that is a command, which it is, then it must be possible to obey, right? Our Lord would not, through His Holy Spirit, give us a command that weren't able to obey. So let's look at that first. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit, before we look at these family rules, these table rules that are laid out for us. This is very important.

Here's the first thing. I want you to see that in verse 18 he's going to give us the comparison. He's going to give us the comparison between being filled, or drunk, with alcohol or wine, with being filled with the Spirit. He's actually going to compare these two. Now sometimes people come to this text and the only thing they can see in this text is a contrast. But I want you to see first of all there is comparison. Do you see that in verse 18? He says, 'Be not drunk with wine this will lead to debauchery (or excess, your KJ version will say), but be filled with the Spirit. I want you to see that there is a comparison here. What he is going to say is there's something that is very similar, a common denominator, with being drunk with wine and also with being filled with the Spirit. This is gonna help us understand a command that is sometimes very foggy. Have you ever heard or thought, 'I'd love to be filled with the Spirit, but I'm just not sure, practically, what that means.' I mean, it sounds really good. We all want to be filled with the Spirit. Right? I mean, I don't know any Christian that says, 'I don't want to be filled with the Spirit.' But what does it mean in practical terms? Well, this is going to help us. First of all, there is a comparison. He's comparing alcoholic beverage that, when it is taken in, it has the power –what is possessed has the power to

possess the possessor. Does that make sense? That wasn't very clear. Okay, let me try again. He's saying that wine, alcoholic beverages, when its taken to the point when the person actually becomes drunk, has the power to control. An outside substance taken in has the power to control. That is the same comparison given in this passage about the Spirit of God. He's saying, 'The Spirit of God –outside, third person of the Trinity– when indwelt inside of a human being has the power to control them. That's the similarity. Does that help you at all? You still look a little unclear. Well, its not done yet. He also going to say there is a contrast. So there is a comparison that both of them are outside sources that taken in have the power to control you from the inside out. But he also gives a contrast. He says here's the problem with drinking so that you become drunk –you lose control. Do you see that? Be not drunk with wine because this will lead to what? This is a big word. You probably haven't used it this week . . . Debauchery. Alright? It means all kinds of out-of-control sinful activity. Or you lose control of all kinds of faculties. Those of you who have been addicted to strong drink before or still battle with that, you understand how that substance can cause you to do and react and do things you would never do when your not under the control of that substance. What he's say that what alcohol does is not a stimulant, it's a depressant. It actually depresses your ability to say 'No' to things. So what he's saying is it has the power to lead you to lack of control. Here's the contrast. The Spirit of God has the ability to give you control. See that? So there is a contrast too. Alcohol, leading to drunkenness leads to out-of-control life whereas the Spirit of God, allowing Him to fill you, will lead you to control.

13.10 You might want to write this passage down. This will help you. In Galatians chapter 5, the scriptures teach us that there is the flesh –and there are all these characteristics. Remember all the things that are listed? Its really ugly. Works of the flesh. Then he gives fruits of the Spirit. We know those quite well, right? Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and all of those. But then later on, he says we need to walk in step with the Spirit. Now what does that mean? That helps me. I have a simple mind. Being filled with the spirit means walking in the Spirit –or in step with the Spirit. To walk is voluntary, right? I have to make a choice in my mind that I am going to walk. And then I begin to do that. Col 3:16, the sister passage to this says that we're to be filled with the Word. The Word of Christ is to indwell us richly. And now we're supposed to be under control of the Word. Here's

one way of looking at it. We're told in the Scriptures we're to yield to the Spirit. What does a yield sign mean? When you see a yield sign, what are you supposed to think? The other person has the what? (Right of way.) Okay, that's what it's supposed to mean. Doesn't always mean that, but that's what its supposed to mean. The other person has the right of way. Here's what being filled with the Spirit is. I want everybody to hear this: It doesn't mean being perfect. It doesn't mean always keeping it together. It means that I give the Spirit of God right of way in my life more often than I give the flesh right of way in my life. Do you get that? We've got this battle going on in our flesh right now, right? Our flesh is the Spirit, in Gal 5, says they're at war with one another . . . and yielding to the Spirit versus yielding to things of the flesh is giving the Spirit of God the right of way in my life more often than I give the flesh the right of way. 14.55 You say, 'How does that have anything to do with my home?' Here's what it has to do with your home: Two sinners get married, right? All God's people said, Amen. That's what happens. You might be saved by Grace, or you're still two sinners. When two sinners occupy any household, there's gonna be times when one is not yielding to the Spirit and they're yielding to the flesh. You know what I'm saying? All God's people, nod your head. Alright, you know what I'm saying. Every wife in this room knows her believing husband, when he is not yielding to the Spirit and he is yielding to the flesh. I've got someone here in the second row that would yell "Amen." Okay? She knows when that's happening. The same thing is true of husbands in this room. You know when your wife is not yielding to the Spirit and is yielding to the flesh. And he is going to start this whole conversation, not giving us a checklist, but saying, listen, you must be filled with the Spirit if you're going to enjoy the kind of home rules that he's guiding us in and the power of the Gospel in your family's life.

So I want to suggest to us, before we start, say it with me, "Be filled with the Spirit" before you address you home situation. You may say there are pockets of dysfunction in our home.

The first thing we need to ask ourselves is, are we allowing ourselves to be filled with the Spirit? Are we praying to be filled with the Spirit? Are we yielding to the Spirit more than we're yielding to the flesh?

Now with that in mind, let us talk about the Spirit-filled husband. What does he look like? Many of you wives are wanting to know. [This kind of comment has no place in

the pulpit. It undermines the husband's role in the marriage and in the house.] What would he look like if your husband is yielding more to the Spirit than he is the flesh. 16.26 We've got this battle going on where we're allowing the means of grace, the Word of God, and prayer, and the fellowship of God's people and preaching when we come together to encourage us to yield to the Spirit more than the flesh. And how do you know you're growing Spiritually? Are you yielding to the Spirit more than you're yielding to the flesh? I think there are a lot of us who can confess, 'You know what? As I look at my Christian life over the last five, six years I'm not yielding to the flesh as much as I used to.' And that's what Spiritual growth is all about. Now, what does a Spirit-filled husband look like? You'll notice here in verse 23, it says the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church. His body is in himself is the savior. Let's look at verse 25, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. I want to give you these characteristics as they're laid out here. Here's what a Spirit-filled husband's gonna look like. When he's animated by the Spirit –ladies you can count on them– this is what you're going start seeing. First of all, you're going to find he's a lover. Some of you are saying, I've got that all set brother. Maybe you don't understand what we're talking about here. Okay? He is a lover. It says he is going to be like Christ and he's going to love his wife by sacrificing himself for her. This is not just warm feelings. It's not romantic music, necessarily. He says there is going to be this self-sacrifice that is pictured the way that Christ sacrificed Himself for the Church. Now what we're going to be told is that when a Spirit-filled man is loving his wife he is reflecting that he, indeed, us just like Jesus. What is this love like? You'll notice here in verse 25, he says, here's what its like, its not just feelings, its that he's giving himself up for her. 18.18 So men, here's the hard part, what he is saying here is that this kind of Biblical love, Spirit-filled men are going to be self-sacrificing, saying "no" to themselves in order to demonstrate love to their bride. [This is the mistake many other pastors make: they have a very narrow view of what Eph 5:25 means. These pastors choose to ignore the other relational aspects of Christ and the Church. Their emphasis on "sacrifice" overshadows all the other characteristics of the Christ/Church relationship. Brian furthers his error by ignoring or diminishing all of the other Scripture that speaks to the husband/wife relationship. He, like so many others, has abandoned basic hermeneutics on this

topic.] So the question we have to ask ourselves is, “What have we said ‘no’ to in the last week so that we could show love to our bride?” What did you say, “I’m not going to do that, even though I love doing that because I want to show love to my bride.” I want us to understand that this is a reverse of the curse. If you go back to Genesis chapter 3 – which is a wonderful place to go. There’s a lot of discussion about gender roles were a result of the curse. That is not at all what you see in the Scriptures. What we see in the Scriptures though, is, because of the curse, we looked at it a couple of weeks ago, now everything is all confused. And we’re told that what’s going to happen as a result of the curse –you know what man’s gonna typically want to do now? Genesis 3 says he’s going to want to rule, dominate, coerce his wife. The tendency is not going to be to love her with Christ-like sacrificial love. Men, here’s where our –it’s like a grocery cart that always go the other way. Here’s what our tendency is going to be. Our tendency is going to be to try to rule over our wives in a dominating authoritative way and not a Christ-like sacrificial way. What he’s saying here is what’s going to happen is a result of a Spiritual man is he’s going to be a lover, be one who’s tender, one who’s sacrificial. One who tries to meet the needs of his wife.

And that leads us to the next point. He is also a learner. He is a learner. Here’s a text –we don’t have time to spend on it today– but I want you to look it up later, this is your assignment. He says that men ought to dwell with their wives, verse 7, in an understanding way. [First of all, Brian has taken 1 Pet 3:7 in isolation –out of context. Secondly, he has overlaid meaning that has been fabricated from an over-zealous imagination. The fathers of early Christianity used the word “knowledge” (gnosis) in the New Testament to mean spiritual knowledge or specific knowledge of the divine. This verse has nothing to do with the husband “learning” about the worldly preferences of his wife. How does Brian reconcile his teaching that the husband “learn” about his wife with 1 Cor 11:8-9? Third, let’s not forget 1Tim 2:11, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.” It is the woman who is admonished to learn, not the man.] What the scriptures teach is that we’re supposed to get to know our bride. [The Bible clearly does not teach this. He has fabricated this idea.] We’re to learn them. Now, I don’t think I’d be surprised by anyone here, but when you got married, men, there was no instruction manual given to you for your wife. Do you realize that? Some of you say, “I wish I had gotten that. I don’t read instruction

manuals much, but I would have read this one. We’ve got no instruction manual.” [Consistent with contemporary culture, Brian inserts these derogatory remarks that characterize men as insensitive oafs. Instead, men should be characterized as pillars of the family, as Christ is to the church.] Yeah, we did. Scriptures teach us that, actually, our wives, they’re the instruction manual and now our life-long goal is to draw out of them what makes them tick. [This is an outrageous comment. In light of the Christ-church / husband-wife parallel of Eph 5, is this how Christ would be characterized? Is this Christ’s role? To draw out of us what makes us tick? Again, how does Brian reconcile his teaching with 1 Cor 11:8-9, 1 Pet 3:1-6, and the many other scripture that clearly sets the relationship. Brian’s teaching is in opposition to other scripture.] And men here’s the good news, you only have to get to know one woman this way. [Another comedic remark that is inappropriate for many reasons.] The Scriptures say we’re supposed to learn them. [Scripture does not say we’re supposed to learn them. Man as a “learner” is akin to yielding, just as a student learning must yield their instruction. Where in scripture does Brian get this idea? To the contrary:

1 Cor 11:7 For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: 9 for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man: 10 for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God.]

Now, it didn’t take me long to realize in my marriage that I did not know my wife. I had only one brother, my mother was the only female in the home, and I did not know my wife. I didn’t realize how different we were. I remember one time it became real obvious. One of my first birthdays while we were married and I was working at the office that day and my wife was also working as the secretary at the church. It was the exact day of my birthday, and I looked outside the window and to my horror there was a florist that arrived in the driveway, in the parking lot, and he came in with this big bouquet of balloons. Now I don’t know about you, but men, I was not excited about balloons coming to my office. But I knew my wife was very excited; and I watched her follow

the florist in with this big bouquet of balloons. She's smiling in the background about how happy I was going to be when I got all these balloons. It was embarrassing! It was like I got a big bouquet of balloons! That was a learning lesson for me. I remember another time where we got into bed one night and my wife, she gave me this choice. Men, whenever you're given choices like this don't answer. Okay? I was given a choice—we'd just been married, not long—and she said, when you think of me, do you think of me as plump, fat, or chubby? Those were my only three choices! What I should've said is "E", none of the above! 22.27 I didn't. I chose the one I thought was the least insulting. "Plump?" Then I got kicked out of bed that night. [This story is not edifying. A man getting kicked out of his own bed (even by his wife) is not an example to be shared with a congregation, no matter how funny you think the story. It plays to the secular caricature of the male and places him, again, in a light that is not consistent with his Biblically prescribed position in the relationship.] You learn each other. Right? When we were married—before we were married—my parents, they had this system that whenever there was a vacation, we were gonna get things accomplished. They would literally lay out on a tablet, a piece of paper on the kitchen table, that would lay out all the tasks we were going to complete during vacation. We might be able to have a day trip, but vacation was for accomplishing things that you can do no other time during the summer. That's the way I was raised! When I got married, that's what I thought you do on vacations—you organize the garage, all kinds of neat stuff. My wife was raised totally different. Vacations meant vacations. You go somewhere. You do something. You spend money. That's what you do. I remember our first vacation where we're headed to Bar Harbor to enjoy some fun. We had an argument all the way there. It was bad! It was really bad. But why? Because we were so different, and I wasn't walking in the Spirit, I wasn't loving my wife, and I certainly hadn't learned her. [These stories undermine the Biblical model. The lesson from his stories is that the man must submit to the wife. His lesson is aligned more with secular teachings, which are not biblically based. Rather, they are based on secular humanism—that we evolved. Secular humanists believe that we are born good and that the institutions of the world are what corrupt us. These secular world views taint any understanding of who we really are—creations in God's image who are born into sin, requiring the Savior who is a ransom for us before God.] You know what the

Scriptures teach us, men, our greatest task of showing love for our bride is not to assume we just know her. We have an assignment from Christ to show this kind of love by discovering and learning what makes them tick. Here's a third thing. He's also a leader. You'll see here the word "head." We talked about this. But this has the idea that he is going to be the authority oversight of the family. That's his role. Again, like last week, this doesn't mean inferiority versus superiority. It simply means that God has given the man, in reflection of Christ, to be the leader of the home. Men, I want to ask you, do you consider this as a way you're supposed to fill, as a Spirit-filled believer, to show and initiate the way the family should go? I want to say to you very clearly, that if your wife is having to motivate you Spiritually, you are failing in this category. [Why the presumption that men are "failing in this category?" Secondly, a woman is not to try to "motivate" him, especially Spiritually. She is to act in accordance with 1 Peter 3:1 - 6. Her spirit and demeanor should be of the character of Sarah, who's character was such that she addressed Abraham as "lord." Where is that in this sermon? Where are the lessons of the spirit and attitude the woman is to assume with her husband?] If your wife is always the one having to say, "You know what, can we please read the scriptures?" "Can we please attend church?" "Can we please get our kids in a place where they can grow spiritually?" [If the woman is asking in this manner, then she has already gone too far and it is she who needs instruction. 1 Peter 3 does not instruct the woman to ask over and over. Brian has positioned these questions, knowing his audience, that is ill-equipped to discern Biblical teaching, to respond, "My, what a wonderful Christian woman. She just wants what is best." Can't pastors see that it is not her place to push her husband in any way toward Spiritual matters. 1 Peter 3 is very clear about this. 1 Peter 3 clearly describes what the woman's heart is to be toward her husband. The problem in many Christian marriages today is not the man. Women have abandoned their Biblical roles for what the culture defines them to be. And they've abandoned their roles because pastors are not admonishing them of what Scripture prescribes. So, yes, "be filled with the Spirit". 1 Peter 3 is one place in Scripture that provides a practical application of how women are to "be filled with the Spirit"—as Sarah was to Abraham.] If you're always having to be pushed that way, men, what we find here is that God expects for you, as the man of the home, to initiate and to lead in that way. [Outside of pride and condescension, why do

pastors address men this way? Do they really think that talking at a man, even if he is falling short in these areas, is going to be motivated? Quite the opposite. It's no wonder women are populating the pews more than men. I'm a believer and after hearing this type of condescending nonsense, I don't really feel much like going to church.

Like many pastors, Brian is preaching to appeal to women. He's creating a connection with the woman instead of directing her back to her husband; directing her back to Scripture (1 Peter 3) in how she is to relate to her husband. What this does is create a division, an animosity, between the woman and her husband. It creates an alliance between her and the pastor and, therefore, an unholy alliance with someone outside the husband-wife relationship. The church was never meant to be used to drive a wedge between husband and wife, but that is the effect when pastors make this grave error.] That should be true financially, that should be true also spiritually and raising your children as the Lord gives your family children. What God expects from the Dad, from the husband, from the man, the spiritual man, someone who's gonna initiate a kind of Christ-like love. That's a Spirit-filled husband. Say it with me . . . Be filled with the Spirit." Men, this is not a checklist. 25.31

Don't go home saying, "I'm gonna try to do better." That's not what we need to do. We need to fall on our knees and ask the Spirit of God to fill us and he'll change us.

25.39 What about the Spirit-filled wife? You'll notice this passage starts in verse 22, speaking to wives. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. Here's the first thing. She is to be submissive. She is to be submissive. Now listen, you can take all of the major New Testament passages that talk about the role of the wife in the home, and this is true of every one of those passages. We can try to change it, but every one of those passages are going to say that this is going to be the characteristic of the Spirit-filled wife. Well, what does the word mean? The word literally means to "arrange yourself under." Our King James version –I like this translation because it says submit yourselves –and it reflects as I mentioned to you before that middle voice, and that's the first point. It is voluntary. What you see in the Scriptures is that if a man ever starts thinking that they need to remind their wife that they need to submit, you're way out of bounds. [Where does Brian get this? As the "head" of the relationship, the Spiritual leader of

the relationship, it is his duty to remind his wife of her obligations to not just him, but to God. It was God who addressed Eve in her position and disposition. If a wife needs to be reminded, why shouldn't her husband remind her? Where does it say in Scripture that he shouldn't?] What the Scriptures teach us is that what ought to happen as the Spirit fills the wife, she, not because of inferiority, but because of her Love for Christ [And what about her agape love for her husband? Her obligation to him out of love. Why the presumption that she is viewed as inferior?] is going to allow herself to be arranged under her husband's leadership ["in everything"]. That's voluntary. Right now, we have a voluntary military. That's not always true. Sometimes we have a military that drafts people against, perhaps, even their will. Right now we have a voluntary military. ["Voluntary" is not how scripture characterizes her submissive state. "Voluntary" implies "optional" and Brian's example supports that concept. 'I don't have to volunteer for the military if I don't want to.'

To frame the relationship more accurately, the husband's rule is not a role that the husband takes or demands, but is a role that the wife grants or allows. True submission occurs when the woman allows her husband to rule over her. It is the wife's burden to create the "rule over thee" dynamic of the relationship. God addressed Adam's wife with the directive, charging her with the responsibility. The woman's obligation to submit is not to her husband, but to God. It was God who directed the woman in this matter. The woman is accountable to God for ensuring her husband is able to rule over her. To characterize the woman as "volunteering" is misleading. It sends the message to women that it is okay for her not to submit to her husband.] That's what's reflected here in this text. That this is a voluntary response of a wife that wants to allow her husband to lead as God has told him to. Here's the second thing. It is singular. It is singular. It says to her own husband. Do you see that? This is not to any other man. This is not a sixth sense where men can say they have superiority; that we can tell women what to do in other categories. He's talking about the home here folks. The arena here is the singular submission to her own husband. And finally, it is respectful. You see in verse 33, he is going to summarize this. Let each one of you love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Ladies, if I can say something real quickly: What the scriptures teach, is that God has wired a man in such a way that he needs the admiration of his bride.

Now it is very disrespectful for a man to tell his wife that because it sounds very egotistical and you may view it as such. But just you are wired to need love, as the Scriptures teach a man to, a man is wired to need respect. [Scriptures don't teach a man to love. They instruct him to. They remind him to.] When that respect is not given, it makes a marriage very difficult and very deficient. That's why the scriptures sum up this whole submission in terms of respect. You want to know what it looks like? If "submission" is a really hard word in our culture for you to embrace –as I can understand– embrace this, show admiration and encouragement to your husband. I want us to note something. The Scriptures teach us something that some ladies don't understand. Do you realize that the Word of God tells us in 1 Cor 7 that men actually do want to please their wives? Ladies, you may have a deep breath on that one, but it really is true. The average husband really does want to bring pleasure to their wife. It's a very respectful thing to know that he's pleasing her. 1 Cor 7 talks about how that this is something that a man is wired to do. They do want to please their wives. [Where in Scripture does the "wired" concept come from? To be Scripturally accurate, it is more about an order of relationship as designed by God. Brian, like others, mischaracterizes the respect a man is due to some fickle need of his. That's not it at all. The mischaracterization of the man's need for respect trivializes his position in the relationship. This is not about offering a token to satisfy the man's willie-nillie preference. It is staying within the bounds of obedience to the order which has been since creation.

It is not some fickle need, rather, it is modeled after what is called out in Ephesians –as the Church is to Christ, the woman is to the husband. It is about her obedience to God. Her obedience will bring a balance and harmony to the relationship. Her disobedience causes hardship and tension (Prov 21:9, 21:19, 25:24, 27:15.) Her non-submission creates disharmony. James could easily have been writing of the envy (desire) women naturally have toward their husbands' rightful position in the relationship. Jas 3:16 "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."]

29.02 We're told in 1 Timothy that a man who is filled with the Spirit wants to provide and protect their family. These are normal things. I want to encourage our ladies to think in terms of this: A man –this may not sound very romantic, its not very romantic– but God has wired a man so that his major identification is going to be at the

place that he is working. [There's that secular "wired" concept again. 'Where he is working!?' Where is THAT in scripture!?] He is wired to go and provide and protect for a family and when things are going well in the place where he is employed, life is alright. [This is straight from the secular humanism handbook. ". . . when things are going well in the place where he is employed, life is alright?" Again, where is that found in Scripture?]

[In sleight of hand, Brian is using words to flip the order of the relationship around. In the following section, addressing the women, he relegates the man's needs as "how he is wired" vs. how, in his addressing the men, he places the onus on the man to "learn" his wife.] Now for many of you ladies, you say that is incredibly unromantic! Because you're wired differently, most of you. Most of you are wired where your major identification is how things are going in the family and how things are going in relationships. Don't you see the wonderful complimentary way that God has created us, so that we can enjoy that? [No, I don't see in Scripture where this has anything to do with the dynamic of a Biblical marriage. What I see is avoidance of Biblical teaching and an affinity toward the secular humanistic world view.] If we don't understand it, is what will happen is that we'll be disrespecting –wives will be disrespecting husbands and they don't even realize it. Where they begin to constantly criticize the way the person provides or the way they try to approach what God has wired them to do. Let me encourage us to look at submission –perhaps its helpful to look at it as this word that is summarized in verse 33 as respect. [There are many other verses that speak to the wife's obligation to submit to her husband. These many other verses provide much clarity on what that means. Summarizing it to one word (respect) is misleading. Now ladies, I mentioned the major weakness of the man, based on Genesis 3. Genesis 3 says, here's how a man's gonna react now that he's a fallen creature. He's going try to rule and dominate the woman. [That is not what Genesis 3 says at all. God clarifies the woman's relationship to Adam –He calls out her sinful **disposition**, "and thy desire shall be to thy husband;" and He reminds her of her **position**, "and he shall rule over thee." You cannot ignore that the directive given by God to the woman is in the context of her being deceived by Satan and then misleading Adam to eat of the forbidden tree. The directive is therefore God's response to the woman, knowing her tendency, i.e., her **predisposition**. Her predisposition, that of all women, is that she will want to

assert rule (conscious or otherwise, Christian and non-Christian) over her husband, misleading the man as the woman did Adam.

God makes clear what the woman's position is to the man: She is under his authority and power. "He shall rule over thee" is a directive given by God to the woman regarding her position to Adam, her husband. Hierarchy in the relationship comes from God. The woman is to submit to her husband's authority. This is a theme throughout the Old and New Testaments. Note that this hierarchy is on the horizontal plane –the husband-wife relationship. On the vertical plane (Gal 3:28), in our individual relationships to God, husband and wife are equal. We will all stand before Him.

Many today are agitated by Gen 3:16 because it challenges the secular view (Prov 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man . . . 1Cor 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God . . .) that permeates pop-culture and has bled into Christian culture and teaching. Matthew Henry understood the natural reaction many have to Gen 3:16: "Whatever there is of uneasiness in this, it is an effect of sin coming into the world."

Note the reasons for the sentence He laid on Adam and all men. Eating the forbidden fruit is most commonly the focal point, but notice the explicit correction for listening to his wife, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife . . ." God is telling Adam that his sentence, in part, is due to the err of listening to his wife –it compliments what He just told Eve, that she is to submit to her husband's authority. Gen 3:17 is consistent with the many New Testament verses as well.]

That's why he's commanded, no, if you're Spirit-filled, your not going to do that. Your gonna love her. Here's how you're going to show her love. Your going to tenderly serve and self-sacrifice. That's how you're going to lead her. But I want you to also notice that in Genesis 3, we're told that the woman now, under the curse, her desire is going be to rule over her husband. 30.44 It's the same phrase used in Genesis 4 to describe what Cain was doing. Cain was letting desire master him. Remember that? When God speaks to him and says don't let desire master you. Ladies, the tendency, when you're not walking in the Spirit is not to allow your husband to lead you. So what He's telling you, is your greatest command is to respect –his greatest need is respect. Greatest need for a woman is love. Men, our greatest command is to love our wives.

[I don't see Brian calling out the women in a condescending way as he does the men. I also don't see him putting women in a presumptive negative light as he does the men. This is a pattern I've observed with many contemporary Christian pastors. The secular culture has had great influence on the Christian community.]

I do want to point out some exceptions, though. These are very important. In the Scriptures, we see there are exceptions for immoral, illegal, or unbiblical behavior. You see this in verse 23 and 22, wives submit to your own husbands as to what? as to the Lord. I want us to be very clear. Ladies, this scripture is not teaching that if your husband is encouraging you to do something immoral, against your conscience, unbiblical, or illegal, that you, in some way, are supposed to submit to that. The scriptures have none of that. Romans 13 actually tells us that the government has been set up for our protection. In this situation, there is a distinction I want to make –a believing versus an unbelieving husband. This is very helpful for us as a church family and we need to hear this for a second. 1 Peter 3 describes a situation where some of you ladies are in. You have an unbelieving husband. It describes how you are supposed to live out your faith in that context. Some of you have been living in that context for years. God gives you a description about how –that your life is going to be the greatest testimony to help evangelistically drawing to your own husband's salvation. But I want us to understand too that when two believers or two professed believers live in a home, and one of them will continue to participate in sin, then there is a responsibility, according to Matthew 18 for the church family to address that. In other words, ladies, I want you to hear this. [Why is Brian addressing just the women? The presumption is that women in the church are not sinful, abusive, or partaking in illegal activities. It presumes that if there is a problem in the marriage, then it must root in what the man is doing or not doing.] If there is some type of abuse going on in your marriage, that is not something that you can just gloss over. That is something your church family –if its illegal, it needs to be dealt with through the law– but if its something that needs to be dealt with because there's a sin that is unconfessed in the home; if it will not be confessed, the scriptures tell us, you go one person, then you go two, and ultimately the whole church needs to address this. In too many churches today, there is this idea that women need to submit and men can sin and it not be confronted. That is not from the scriptures, dear folks. The scriptures tell us that we're supposed to watch

one another and watch over one another lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. I want to be clear that as a church family, there are no closed doors when you allow sin to be in a home un-confronted. That is not what the scriptures teach us.

[Brian has a duty to call out the woman's obligation to God and to their husbands and to call out their predispositions as much as, or more (if he wants to make it proportional to Scripture), than he does for men. We know the efficacy of the Word of God. If pastors, including Brian, were presenting faithfully to Scripture the husband and wife's positions, dispositions, and predispositions, the state of Christian marriages would be noticeably better than the secular population, but it isn't.

Why do I have to search out a series on forgiveness on the internet? Why hasn't my church (EBBC) in the last 20 years provided any depth on this most important Christian topic. Forgiveness (and its close relative, repentance) is central to living a Christian life and most certainly to a Christian marriage. The absence of forgiveness and repentance in a marriage is dooming to the relationship.

Neglect by church leaders of Biblically-based teaching on the marriage relationship has created the problems that pastors are overwhelmed with. What they don't realize is that their faulty teaching is a large part of the problem. They are perpetuating a secular view.

What the secular view offers is a counterfeit. So this counterfeit is the real divorce; a separation or departure from the original design -the real thing. It is the Biblical model of marriage replaced with a lie. And this is the root of the divorce trend -that the woman's emotional state is expected to be the centerpiece to which the man must submit.

The secular view flips submission. In the secular view, the man is required to submit to the woman's emotional state. The secular view is backwards. 1 Cor 11:8 "For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." The counterfeit destroys the relationship. It undermines the original design.

Unfortunately, many women and many pastors have bought into the secular lie. "Men don't understand women." "Men don't communicate well." The man is looked at as aloof. The secular lie points back to the man

as the problem in the relationship. After all, he is the one that has relational deficiencies.

In each area where Satan has penetrated in our society, he has flipped what is right with what is evil. Satan has been working the Biblical marriage to the point where he has been quite successful in undermining God's design. Our understanding of the marriage relationship has been under attack for the last 50+ years and it has seeped into the church. This sermon is a prime example.]

Scriptures teach us that in those situations, God has set up a way for the church family to encourage, for sin to be confessed, and for family to be restored. So, I want us to be clear that this is not a situation where we're saying that a woman should submit herself to illegal, immoral, or unbiblical behavior. The scriptures do not teach that.

Number 2, she is to be a supervisor of her home. This may sound a little contradictory, but it's not. Remember when we covered this in Titus 2? Titus 2 says that women need to be managers of their home. Men, women need to be managers of their home. So, allow them to manage the home. Scriptures tell us in the ESV that they need to be workers. This word has the idea of supervisor, that she should be the one that's going to supervise the home. Remember in Proverbs 31? Here's a lady who's not just sitting at home. She's a real estate agent. I mean, she's busy. The picture is not one sitting at home just knitting, just making meals, not that those are bad at all. Here's a woman who's very involved in the supervision not only of her own home, but out in the marketplace. What the scriptures teach is that a woman who is filled with the Spirit is actually going to manage her home well.

34.52 Here's the final characteristic. She is to be sweet in her attitude. 1 Pet 3:4 is going to describe that sweet spirit. It's also mentioned in Titus. Have you ever heard this saying? "A happy wife is a happy life." Have you ever heard that? What about this one, "If mommy ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." You ever heard those? You ever experience those?—don't say anything. This is true my beloved brothers and sisters. This is true. You know, God created it that way. Ladies, I want you to understand that your home is not only your management territory that your husband ought to be allowing you to manage, but it's also the potpourri of life. You're the one that makes that a wonderful place for family to come home to. You're the one that makes that place a sweet aroma of grace. I want us to understand that what the scriptures are laying out for us here is a Spirit-filled

husband and a Spirit-filled wife, as they work together in a complementary way, there is going to be a taste of heaven in your home. Now, I'll give you this disclaimer. When we're not filled with the Spirit, is there going to be a taste of heaven in your home? Yes or No? No. There's going to be dysfunction. Dear folks, I want us to be aware and not surprised, when there are moments of dysfunction. Well, how do we deal with that. How do we deal with the dysfunction when it is exposed? A husband's not loving like he should. He's used harsh words to speak to his wife. He hasn't served her. He's wanted to be served. What about when a wife is not respecting her husband and she demeans him? Here's what you need to do. The sweetest words, besides "I love you" and maybe sweeter, are, "I sinned against you, please forgive me." What do the scriptures teach us? Scriptures teach us that what ought to be happening at home is what ought to be happening with every believer. When we sin against each other, we confess that sin, and what do we do? We forgive one another and there is reconciliation. Folks, too often in families, what has happened is what Jesus said, there is a hardness of heart between couples. How does this happen? The word hardness is the same word for callousness. The picture is there was a time when you were madly in love, and now you don't even like each other. I used to think that when people said to me, I don't love him anymore or I don't love her anymore, that they were lying. That was my take on the first few times I heard that . . . you're lying. I mean, how can somebody be so madly in love on the wedding alter and now you don't like each other. Then I realized. They're telling the truth. They don't like each other. They don't like each other. How do people fall out of love like that? Well, Jesus put it this way, he said here's how divorce ever happens: it was because of the hardness of hearts. What happens in a marriage? What happens in a marriage is a lack of trust or lack of reconciliation starts building up these callouses between the husband and wife and before long, it's totally honest when they say, "I don't love you anymore." The feelings aren't there. Dear folks, the way to rip off those callouses is to start dealing with sin in a biblical way. And to lovingly and truthfully confess to one another when you've sinned against each another. When you're confronted by your other spouse and your spouse says to you, "You've sinned against me in this way," the scriptures tell us we're supposed to confess that sin and forsake it.

I want to finish with this. 38.22 We're told in this passage that this is –see how it's mingled up– we go from the marriage to Christ in the church, back and forth. What he's saying is –this is not an illustration that Paul just pulled out of the hat. Sometimes we think that, okay, well Paul was just sitting there thinking, "What can I do to illustrate marriage? Maybe the sun and moon? Maybe the dew on the grass? Oh, I got it! Christ and the church!" It was not that at all. Folks, I want us to understand, that when God created marriage, we're told in Eph 1, that it was as if Christ was sacrificed before the foundation of the world. The Gospel was already thought of before we were created. Marriage, now, is going to be a picture of something that was already enacted. So when God created man and woman, it was already a picture –its supposed to be a testimony of what Christ was going to do for the Church when he died for our sins. [Don't agree with that at all. Paul compares marriage to the Christ-church relationship, not the other way around.] I can honestly say, there are times where my wife will respect me in such a way that it convicts me, because it reminds me how I don't respect Christ as a member of the church. Wives, is there ever a time where your husband is so loving and so self-sacrificing, such a learner, such a leader, that you go, "The only person I can think of that is like that is Jesus." There ought to be moments in our marriage – I'm not saying this is consistent– but as we yield to the Spirit, there ought to be moments where the husband is convicted by the respect of the wife because it so resembles the way that the church ought to submit to Christ. There ought to be times where the wife is so smitten by the tender self-sacrificing love of her husband that she says, "The only person that loves like this is Jesus!" This ought to be happening from time-to-time. You want to build strong churches? The way you build strong churches is by the Spirit of God building strong families. Amen? Say it with me, Be filled with the Spirit. 40.20

Why would Brian base a sermon on the husband/wife relationship on just one scripture passage when there are so many others that speak to it?

Overall, Brian's presumptions about the state of the men in EBBC and, thus, the content of his sermon, are destructive to the man's authority and role in the home, much less in the relationship with his wife . . . and the two are inextricably connected. Pastors need to be careful with how they view and characterize the husband/wife relationship.

Scripture addresses disruption in the marriage often from the point of the woman's abandonment of her biblical role. (e.g., Proverbs 21:9, 21:19, 25:24, 27:15) Pastors who don't acknowledge the woman's predispositions, but lay the state of the marriage at the feet of the husband are encouraging women in their sinful predisposition.

The woman has the power to set the tone of the marriage. Biblically, she is clearly instructed how to conduct herself before her husband.

Under secular pressures, pastors have flipped the relationship around by laying the responsibility on the man to somehow deliver to her certain tokens that will place her in a right state of emotional feeling. They mistakenly admonish the man to submit to his wife's fickle emotional state. This turns out to be futile for many men (and, thus, their wives) because it is not aligned with the reality of God's design. It sets futile expectations on the woman's behalf and so she does not hold up to her obligations in the marriage. In the end, she's not happy and neither is the man.

Pastors have been so intimidated by the pressure from the secular culture, that they present a marriage relationship that is not even recognizable when compared to Scripture. They have softened, back-peddled, and contorted so much to avoid any cultural backlash, that their sermons are grossly imbalanced and go so far, unintentionally, as to teach in opposition to Scripture.

In contrast, Matthew Henry makes a refreshing balanced presentation of the husband-wife relationship:

"She is here put into a state of subjection. The whole sex, which by creation was equal with man, is, for sin, made inferior, and forbidden to usurp authority, 1Tim 2:11; 1Tim 2:12. The wife particularly is hereby put under the dominion of her husband, and is not sui juris--at her own disposal, of which see an instance in that law, Num. 30:6-8,

where the husband is empowered, if he please, to disannul the vows made by the wife. This sentence amounts only to that command, Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; but the entrance of sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy. If Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to eat it, she would never have complained of her subjection; therefore it ought never to be complained of, though harsh; but sin must be complained of, that made it so. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence."

Observe here how mercy is mixed with wrath in this sentence. The woman shall have sorrow, but it shall be in bringing forth children, and the sorrow shall be forgotten for joy that a child is born, John 16:21. She shall be subject, but it shall be to her own husband that loves her, not to a stranger, or an enemy: the sentence was not a curse, to bring her to ruin, but a chastisement, to bring her to repentance. It was well that enmity was not put between the man and the woman, as there was between the serpent and the woman.

*Emphasis added.

Henry doesn't present it with the presumption of contentiousness. He doesn't present it with blame. He presents it with statement of fact of what our tendencies (predispositions) are and where they root (sin) – men and women.

Pastors have also read into scripture what is not there. For example, they take Genesis 3 and read into it that Adam was lax in his responsibilities. We don't know that. They read into it that Adam was right there when Eve spoke with the serpent. We don't know that. If we were to have those details, God would have provided them. Gleaning a moral lesson from scripture is one thing, but adding to the facts and historical content is quite different and that is what pastors today have done.

It is cruel and sinful for pastors to lay at the feet of men, the responsibility of leading a wife who has been coached by himself, other pastors, authors, and counselors to abandon her obligation to her husband and God; to preach a false teaching; to encourage in

opposition to Scripture; to counsel against Biblical reality.

Lastly, pastors need to acknowledge that even a man who is faithful to the Lord can do only so much with a woman who does not hold her role in the marriage. God has blessed some men with loving wives who hold their position, seek forgiveness, repent, support their husband, always think the best of their husband, are satisfied with who he is in what he does for her, the job he has, and the way he leads the family. Other men have wives who are never satisfied, refuse to seek restoring the relationship through forgiveness and repentance, criticize their husbands, show no gratitude, and seem to live off of tension and ill-will. Men in these situations are

broken reeds. Pastors need to be careful of their presentations before the congregation on how they characterize men. These broken reeds have a hard enough time staying in the game without a pastor inferring that the man is not doing what he should. Neither does it help the man's cause when the pastor neglects his obligation to admonish the women in the church who have been raised and continue to live in an anti-Biblical and anti-man culture.

Proverbs 19:14 says, "a prudent wife is from the LORD." Pastors who have been blessed with Biblically-behaved wives need to watch their own pride. Their prudent wives are a gift from God, not for anything they have done.