

The Fundamental Duties of Wives, Part 1, A. N. Martin

Now let us turn together to 1 Peter. 1 Peter 2: 11 -14. 1Pet 2:11 *Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. . . . 1Pet 2:18 Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. . . . 1Pet 3:1 In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; 2 beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; 4 but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.*

4:03 Now as we resume our studies in 1 Peter this morning we do well to remind ourselves of who it is that wrote the letter and the capacity in which he wrote it. That takes us right back to chapter 1, verse 1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." Peter is reminding those Christians in the various assemblies in Asia Minor to whom this letter originally came. That everything in this letter comes from a man named Peter. But a man named Peter who is not giving his insights or his perspectives or his opinions concerning the matters he addresses in the letter but he speaks to them, he writes to them as Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, who is a uniquely qualified and uniquely authorized representative of Jesus Christ, the Lord. So that what he writes, he writes as one sovereignly chosen by Christ to authoritatively represent the mind of Christ and therefore this epistle is part of the very foundation stock of the church described in Ephesians 2:20 as built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself, the Chief Cornerstone. 5:46 Hence, when this letter first came to the churches in Asia Minor and was read to gatherings of God's people, it was nothing less than Christ Himself standing in the midst of His gathered people in His promised presence, revealing His mind to those who professed to have embrace Him as Prophet, Priest, and

King. When we, almost 2,000 years later, open up this epistle and it is read in our hearing and to the extent it is responsibly expounded and applied consistent with the overall teaching of scripture, you and I are not dealing with the preacher before us, nor are we dealing with Peter, 2000 years ago, it is Christ Himself addressing us in His Word and by His Spirit through that Word.

As we take up this section in the epistle, let me remind you briefly of the general setting. We have this motif of grand indicatives of grace –that is statements of what we are and have in Christ– followed by the imperatives of Grace –the things we ought to be and to do because of what we now are and have. I hope you don't weary of using that terminology. I hope when I die a few of you will remember it and it will be something you will carry through your life. It is the very heart and soul of Biblical teaching with regard to the Christian's way of living. He lives the way he lives because he has become what Grace has made him.

Following the second series of indicatives, i.e., wonderful statements of what we are and have in Christ, Peter begins in Chapter 2, verse 11 another string of imperatives –how we are to live in light of what God in Grace has given us and has made us. He gives this appeal in the negative to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul and positively, to cultivate a lifestyle that commends the Gospel to the on-looking Pagan world.

After giving that general summons, Peter then focuses on the specific area in which God's people are so to walk that men beholding their good works will glorify God in the day if dissertation. The first area that he focuses upon is the area of the believers' obligation to be submissive to authority. Submissive to authority wherever that authority legitimately touches them in the providence of God. He specifies three distinct areas of that authority. Verse 13, he addresses the generic responsibility: be subject to every ordinance of the man for the Lord's sake. Then he gets specific. He deals with the subject in the kingdom and his responsibilities to the ruling powers. So you have the duty of submission on the part of the citizen to the governor or the constituted authority. Then, as we saw in verse 18, he addresses the servants, the house slaves.

Using the same Greek word with different verbal form he tells them that they have a duty to be in subjection to their masters, even the unjust and unrighteous and the unreasonable masters.

He comes to chapter 3, verse 1, in a construction, strictly parallel to verse 18, using the same verb that is used in verse 13, he says, "In like manner, ye wives, be in

subjection to your own husbands.” Then he gives a parenthetical statement, as though someone says, ‘Peter, worst case scenario, I have a husband who’s not only ungodly and un-converted, but he has heard the Word, he openly rejects the Word., he even rejects the Word in its moral and ethical standards as well as the Gospel. Is this applicable to me as well?’ Peter, in a parenthetical statement says, “Even if any obey not the Word.” Here’s the general duty of all Christian wives: Be in subjection to your own husbands. And if you’re in a worst case scenario? Still be in subjection to your own husbands. Having laid out the wife’s duty and the parenthetical statement in the rest of verse one and verse two, in verses 3 – 6 he describes the wife’s true beauty. As we eventually work our way through the passage, we’ll do so under those two major headings –the wife’s fundamental duty (“In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands”) and the parenthetical; then Verses 3- 6 (“Whose adorning let it not be . . . but let it be. . .”) the wife’s fundamental duty is followed by a description of the wife’s essential beauty.^{11:45}

Now that gives you an idea of the overall structure of the passage and how we will eventually work through the passage . . . however, the very mention of the word “submission” in the context of our generation, a context in which from every direction we are being bombarded with popular propaganda, with heavyweight intellectual and at times pseudo-theological arguments to bleed off the obvious meaning of such passages as these. I am convinced from a pastoral standpoint that if I am to responsibly expound and apply and have a reasonable hope that that exposition and application will be received that we need to pause this morning on the threshold of our study of this passage and to do something that I would liken to two analogies. I would like us in the ministry of the Word this morning to clear away the rubble and the rubbish and to build some protective walls around this passage.

First of all, I want to engage in an exercise that I hope that will be something akin to what is being done, and many of us have seen with our eyes and television images, over there in places where homes and businesses and military complexes have been bombed in Yugoslavia.^{13:20} You will see pictures of people going in with in with shovels and bulldozers to clear away the rubble before they can begin reconstruction. Where once there was a usable, and in some cases beautiful edifice stood, the bombs had done their dastardly work and there is nothing but rubble. Before there can be any positive construction of usable facilities, they must clear away the rubble and the rubbish.

The bombs and missiles of feminist teaching, domestic disruptions, and social manipulation have left in our nation at the present time a mass of rubble and rubbish. When we come to a passage like this, it is almost impossible to construct in peoples’ minds a Biblical perspective of what it means for wives to be in submission to their husbands unless we take some time to bring in the bulldozer of God’s Word to clear away the rubbish and the rubble. In the second analogy what I trust to accomplish this morning in our study of the Word is to build protective walls around this passage. If we had constructed a worthwhile edifice in a community where there are those who would threaten the stability of that edifice, who would seek to tear it down, it is wise for us to build protective walls. It’s my concern in the study of the Word this morning to build out of the stuff of Scripture walls around this passage that when we come to it –and I trust by God’s grace to enter into an understanding of it and a new measure of internalizing it as the rule of our lives– those walls will do two things. They will keep us from running out in a hundred different directions with implications that God never intended and to protect us from the ongoing present and future onslaught of popular propaganda and pressure that would move us away from the beautiful edifice of Biblically assigned roles and relationships within the marriage institution.^{15:53}

Well, so much by way of that lengthy introduction to tell you what we’re doing and why. What I want to do this morning is lay out for you three basic propositions, then bring some pointed application at the conclusion.

Here are the propositions: Proposition #1, What the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife’s submission to her husband in no way compromises her inherent, equally shared, created dignity. What the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife’s submission to her husband . . . When we come to 1 Peter 1 and I open up the language and the meaning of the words and grammar it is abundantly clear what God is saying. In the churches of Asia Minor, when one of the elders said, “We’re going to read the latest letter from the Apostle Peter,” he would have read these words in their language in that setting; words we translate “in like manner, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands. There wouldn’t have been one woman that said, ‘Wait a minute Mr. Elder . . .!’ No. It would have been abundantly clear to those women the same way it was abundantly clear when Paul wrote to the churches in the area of Ephesus “As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.” That aint complicated. You don’t need to be a PhD in sociology to understand that. So, my proposition is, what the Bible

clearly mandates concerning the wife's submission to her husband in no way compromises her inherent, equally shared, created dignity. That is, it in no way erodes, casts aspersions upon, or denigrates the inherent equally shared created dignity –the dignity that the woman shares by virtue of creation with her husband. In each of these propositions, having stated them and briefly explained what I mean by them, we're going to look at the issue I'm addressing and then demonstrate the error that lies behind that perspective, and then make some application.

What is the issue that I am addressing under this heading? Bound up in the opposition of the plain meaning of the passages of 1 Peter 3:1, parallel passages in Ephesians and Colossians, and in the pastoral Epistles, is this false assumption that submission of one human being to another necessarily involves inferiority of personhood. Let that sink in. When you cut through all the soap, when you turn over all the rubble, what you find is this assumption: that if one human being is in submission to another human being, someone is in the posture of taking directives from another who is giving directives, you must of necessity have inferiority of personhood on the part of the one submitting and superiority of personhood on the part of the one to whom they submit. That is the heart, the nexus, the nub of the great outcry that comes from every direction, "If women have the same inherent dignity as men then why should a woman be in subjection to a man?" You've got to understand that –if you're going to be able to see through the popular propaganda in your family magazines and the more sophisticated propaganda that comes out of feminist literature– it is this assumption: Submission equals inferiority. ^{20:36}

Now I want to demonstrate the error of that thinking and in so doing, I will do what Jesus did when people came to Him to question about marriage and divorce. In Matthew 19, He said, "*Have you never read, He who made them in the beginning, made them male and female . . .*" He says, 'Go back to Genesis and read it and ponder it and there you will find the answer to the question.' I want to turn to Genesis chapter 1 and do that very thing this morning. What is our answer to those who say that submission, of necessity, involves inferiority? Genesis, chapter 1. The only one that was there has told us how it happened – that's God Himself. When we come to the sixth day of creation we read in verse 26 of Genesis 1, "And God said, Let us make man in our image." It is interesting. It doesn't say 'Let us make humanity in our image' as some newer translations render this. Linguistically, it's untenable. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the

sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply . . ." Here in the first account of 'how did we get here in the first place' God is very careful to underscore a number of things not the least of which, when He lets us in, as it were, to the very inner counsels of the triune God. God says, within Himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." They are both image of God. They share an equally dignified status as image of God. We come to Genesis 2 when the zoom lens is used on some of the details of precisely how did He create them male and female. Genesis 1 does not tell us those details. Genesis 1 is a succinct summarized statement that in His created purpose to have image in the creature whom he makes, He creates them male and female. Precisely how did He do that? Genesis 2 tell us. Genesis 2 gives us the zoom lens. We read in Gen 2:7, "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now, God, Who was there, tells us what He did. He took dust of the ground, and whatever significance of that is, surely God is showing us that man, with all his uniqueness, only man made in God's image, only man has this unique identity as image of God, yet he has an affinity with the Earth around him. He's made of the very Earth. God takes of the dust of the ground and forms man, breathes into his nostrils breath of life and man becomes living soul. ^{24:52} Some ask, 'Well, didn't He make woman at that time?' No, because we read on in verse 15, "And the Lord God took the man and put him (singular) into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. He creates the man, the male of the species, in His image. Yes, remember, everything said in Genesis chapter 1 must be imported into what we think when we read the zoom lens account in Genesis chapter 2. He forms him of the ground, breathes into him breath of life, he becomes a living soul, and then God places him in this beautiful place, the Garden of Eden with a task to accomplish. To dress it and to keep it. There was such a profuseness of life –no weeds yet. Not an unyielding Earth, or one that yields thorns and weeds, but that is so relevant and profuse with life, that Adam had a task to dress it and to keep it. Scripture tells us further in verse 18, "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone." Up until now, he is alone. The only thing in His creation over which God says is not good, that the man should be alone. I will make

a help meet (or an answering to him). Then we have the account of how he made the woman. Verse 21, “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept . . .” He didn’t take another pile of dirt and form the woman. Could He have done it? Yes! God could have taken a chunk off a star or an asteroid. God can do all His Holy will. But He anesthetizes Adam, puts him to sleep, takes one of his ribs—the Scripture says—closed up the flesh and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman and brought her unto the man.” You see, her origins as to the “how” are radically different from Adam’s as to the “how.” Adam is in image of God. The woman is in image of God. Both are image of God. But how did they come into being? God gives us the account of how the man was brought into being, how he brought the woman. He brings her to the man and the man said, (this is one of those passages—I’ve read it many times, I’ve read it out loud, tried to think, how did Adam actually say this? Imagine, you’ve looked at all those animals passing by and you thought with a sinless mind, untainted, and untwisted by sin. Naming meant you were identifying by their unique significance and place in God’s world. God had given Adam this tremendous stewardship to analyze and to assess their place and to name them, to assign, as it were, as part of his dominion and what their place was in God’s creation—by naming them. Yet in all of that the Scripture says there’s no helper answering to his need. As he sees the animals, admires the handiwork of God, the strength of the ox, the beauty of the peacock, something of the majesty of the eagles splitting the air with his wings. There is nothing that answers to him. Nothing in the eyes of which he sees an answer of his own soul. Nothing with which he can communicate as he is able to speak to his God, there is none of his kind. God says, ‘Son, you’re gonna have a nap.’ Adam goes to sleep and when he wakes up, what does he see in front of him? Look at it. And the man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. Here’s one of my kind!’ Now notice, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, not something beneath me or something qualitatively so different from me that I cannot relate to it. Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, she should be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore there’s a debate as to who spoke the words of verses 24 and 25.^{29:25} We know they’re in God’s Word, but whether Adam spoke them, whether this is a comment by Moses is inconsequential. The truth is, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh and they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed.” Is this just myth? No, this is fact. The Lord Jesus Christ put His impromptu on this very thing that I have read, “He who made them in the beginning,

made them male and female and said, and He quotes from this very passage. What’s the significance of all of this? The significance is the man and the woman there in the blissful state of Eden, have an equally shared created dignity. They are both image of God. But in the uniqueness of their sexual identity the woman has been given a capacity to reflect God’s image more profoundly in some ways than the man can reflect His image, even as the man is given the capacity to reflect in certain areas more profoundly the image of God. So that between both of them, in their composite relationship, they reflect God’s image as He purposed. Paul picks up on that in 1 Cor 11. He says, in one sense, the man images God in his place of authority in the way that the woman does not. The woman is the glory of the man, but the man is the glory of God. He’s speaking about a specific aspect of that. Scripture teaches in other ways. There are dimensions of God’s attributes. His character more beautifully expressed in the woman. Does a man have sucking children? God likens Himself to a nursing mother and says, ‘Can a nursing mother forget her child? And neither can I forget you.’ There is something in God’s tender love and compassion mirrored in a nursing mother that’s not mirrored in the most sweet, tender loving compassionate husband or father. You find this all the way through Scripture so that any concept of rivalry¹ that is foreign to God’s original purpose and creation—any nonsense of finding some middle ground in which the man is no longer distinctively masculine and the woman is no longer distinctively feminine, some middle ground of unisex—is a morph and is nothing. It is a slap at the image of God! Therefore, any concept when God says, ‘Wives, be in submission to your own husbands’—what this means necessarily that the woman has been in some way compromised as to her inherent created dignity is utterly contrary to the Word of God. If submission means a compromise of dignity, then Jesus Christ is the biggest offender. My Bible says, He who created all things, before Him all things were created (Luke 2:51) “He went down to Nazareth (and the same Greek word is used) and was subject to them.” Incarnate Deity submitted Himself to two of His creatures. Did He lose any of His dignity? Did He lose any of His inherent worth? The answer is obvious, of course not. Even the Son Himself is subject to the Father. In the scheme of redemption, 1 Cor 15:28, this whole notion that lies at the heart of the focused opposition against any embrace of the Biblical concept of wifely submission has utterly no foundation in the Word of God. What the Bible clearly mandates concerning the

¹ God called out the woman’s tendency for rivalry with her husband in Gen 3:16.

wife's submission to her husband in no way compromises her inherent equally shared created dignity.

Now, dear wives, I trust you hear what I'm attempting to say. You women who are not wives, you girls who hopefully one day will become wives, pray in this fundamental Biblical concept. Don't believe the Devil's lie that the only way to attain your true dignity is to throw off any notion of submission. That is not your dignity, it is your shame. In doing so, you mirror your mother Eve. She shouldn't have been talking to the Devil. If she had any questions about the tree and what to do with it, she should have been talking to her "head," her husband. Dear girls, don't buy this garbage. It batters, and destroys, and defaces the beauty and the glory of what God made you to be. He made you to image Him as a female. Not something halfway between a female and a male. Essential to your identity as a female is the position in the divinely instituted hierarchy of God. 'You're saying that because you're a man!' No. I'm saying that because almighty God has it in His Word. At the end of the day, that's the issue.

My second proposition. What the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife's submission to her husband in no way exaggerates her inherent moral depravity. What the Bible clearly teaches concerning the wife's submission to her husband, in no way exaggerates her inherited moral depravity. Let me explain the issue and then illustrate the error. Some have wrongly interpreted Gen 3:17 to mean that the woman's submission was part of the punishment of fall and therefore, in redemption, which is meant to cancel the effects of the fall we must redemptively throw over any concept of submission. Gen 3:16, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Some claim the concept of the man ruling over the woman is post-fall, therefore, since it is a punishment coming out of the sin and rebellion of our first parents, in Christ and in redemption we ought to neutralize it and have what is called an egalitarian marriage, where there is no concept of rule, of authority or submission but only mutual complementary cooperation. Others have said, "That because I'm a woman and Eve is my mother, we are perpetually consigned to the role of submission because of our solidarity with Eve and that's just something I've got to bear; one of the hardships of life in being a woman." Let me state very clearly from the Scriptures that the wife's submission to her husband in no way exaggerates her inherited moral depravity. How do we know this? The circumstances of the fall of man is recorded in Genesis 3 do have some long term distinct consequences for men

and women together and particularly some for men and some for women. Men don't have multiplied conception and pain during child birth. That was something peculiar to Eve. Generally speaking, it is the man who is working the ground by the sweat of his brow he brings forth that which he needs to support his family. Yes, there are some focused, heightened effects of the fall upon the man and some upon the woman, but the overarching teaching of the Bible is the fall of mankind in Adam has resulted a race of equally depraved men and women, boys and girls. For example, Rom 5:12, *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* That is a genderless statement of profound significance. When we read in Romans 3:10 and following, Paul's summary indictment of the whole human race, *"10 There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none that understandeth, There is none that seeketh after God; 12 They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable."* There is no gender intrusion into those passages. Men and women, boys and girls equally depraved. When God looks down upon humanity prior to the flood, it says He saw that the imaginations and the thoughts in their hearts were only evil continually –no peculiar focus upon men or women. The flood came and swept them all away. It was in that sense, a genderless deluge. Any notion that the wife's submission is something mandated because she has some exaggerated experience or condition of greater inherited moral depravity is without any foundation in the Word of God. Are there sins to which women are more susceptible than men because they are women? Yes, and the Bible addresses those. Are there sins to which men are more susceptible and more natively inclined because of their maleness? Yes. The Bible does not in any way bypass or overlook those realities. Dear wives, dear women, dear girls, don't allow the Devil to accuse God in your thoughts as though submission is a result of an unfair exaggeration of your inherited depravity. It's simply not true. Dear husbands, men and boys don't allow the Devil to deceive you into thinking that the woman's duty to submit is the call for you to treat her as if she is more depraved than you are.

We've got to come to grips with those solid, foundational Biblical realities not only of creation, but also of the implications of the fall.

The third proposition brings us to the heart of redemption. What the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife's submission to her husband in no way undermines her imparted redemptive standing and privilege. What the Bible says concerning the wife's duty to submit in no way is

undermining her imparted redemptive standing and privilege.

There is a growing contingent out there that claims the only way to prove that you really believe that women have equal standing and privilege in Christ is to do away with anything that would put men and women in any hierarchal structure of submission and obedience, not only in the home but even in the Church. So-called evangelical feminists are advancing the premise that until you are ready to have women elders and women pastors, you really don't believe that women have equal status in Christ.

They base their claims on twisted understandings of scripture. They nullify God's order based on manipulated interpretations of the privileges we have in Christ: because women have equal redemptive privilege in Christ, women are equally justified in Christ, women are equally adopted in Christ, women have equal endowment, they receive the Spirit of Adoption, they are brought into the possession of all the privileges that Christ has purchased by His own death upon the cross. Furthermore, they say, the Scriptures say in Christ there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. In their minds, any relationships based on mere gender are obliterated because of redemptive standing and privilege.^{43:31} These evangelical feminists are aggressive! And they're not dolts. Some of them have earned doctorates from prestigious universities and they will use Greek and Hebrew, church history, historical theology to bend the Bible to the spirit of the world. I have been absolutely appalled as I've waded through some of their literature. We need to understand that what the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife's submission to her husband in no way undermines her imparted redemptive standing and privilege.

Now let me expose the error of that thinking. It is obvious when we turn to the pages of Scripture that these issues were not contradictory in the minds of the Biblical writers. Go back to 1 Peter. The same Peter who writes, "*In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands . . .*" has already written in the opening chapters no gender assignment of all of those blessings described in chapter one, verses 3 – 12. 3 "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ . . .*" There's no indication that women in Christ do not have every blessing that Peter identifies. And it is the same all the way through the epistles. Furthermore, in this very section when he comes to address men, look at verse 7: "*Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives*

according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel (now notice) as being also (this is what you are) joint-heirs (a compound word in the Greek that is well rendered as joint heirs –equal heirs) of the grace of life." You both have equal redemptive standing and privilege. Peter found no disconnect in his brain or in his soul to speak of all these blessings in the opening chapters as belonging to men and women equally and saying at the end of this section that addresses men, you need to look upon your wife as a joint heir of the grace of life. Yet, he says, wives, be in subjection to your own husbands. Why? Because in the mind of the Biblical writers who reflect the mind of God there is no undermining of the woman's redemptive standing and privilege by assigning her a distinctive role in the marital relationship. Same thing with the apostle Paul. He can write that marvelous epistle that we know as the book of Ephesians and speaks in genderless terms in all of the blessings that are ours in Christ in the first three chapters and yet when he comes to chapter 5, *wives be submissive to your own husbands . . . as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.* The reason for this is redemptive standing and privilege were never intended to overturn God's creative design and purpose. Get hold of that. Whatever God has purposed in redemption, whatever He does in redemption is never calculated to overturn what He purposed and designed in creation. Redemption goes after that which sin has intruded into the human experience. In creation, God ordained a relationship between the man and the woman that involved a hierarchal structure. That's why Paul –in 1 Cor 11 where he is dealing with this subject in one of its aspects of the male/female relationship in relationship to authority– can go right back to the very passage that we read this morning from Genesis and say in the way that God actually created the man and the woman is a reflection of this hierarchal structure. Look at it in 1 Cor 11:3 "*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*" He makes a specific application to a current situation he was addressing, and in the midst of it, now notice what he says in verse 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.*" Is he saying the woman is not made in the image of God? No. As I pointed out earlier, what he is saying here is that there is one way in which the man more particularly in a more heightened sense reflects the Glory of God, the image of God in his capacity as head in relationship to the woman. 8 "*For the man is not of the woman (Adam was not made from Eve's rib) but the*

woman of the man.” She was made of the stuff of the man. Here is a text that will send every feminist into orbit: 9 *“for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”* If you want to start a war with any feminist, you just quote that text. *“You mean my identity is inseparably bound up with a man? No way.”* One of the driving passions of an articulate feminist is the conviction to know who I am, what I am, how I should function with absolutely no reference point in the male gender. That’s why lesbianism and auto-eroticism is so celebrated among articulate feminists; because they want to assert that their sexual identity and fulfillment has nothing to do with men. That’s not an accident. It is a philosophical and theological conviction.

Now, do you see the point? What does God do in redemption? ^{50:06} Paul is writing to a Christian assembly, sorting out problems that have unique applications to that particular cultural study. As a wise pastor he’s seeking to unravel the thing, not in a cosmetic way, but get down to the deep issue. He says, you’ve got to understand that these peculiar problems –the head-covering (and whatever’s involved in that) and length of hair– it all has to do with something profoundly deep and theological that has its taproots all the way back in creation. Nothing that God is doing in the redemptive grace and power there in Corinth is meant to overturn what God invented in the very created order. That’s what we’ve got to come to grips with.

Embedded in the very created order is this relationship of the wife’s submission to her husband. Yes, the fall has introduced a factor that makes women fight against the rule of their husbands and seek to domineer them. Your desire to be to your husband. Sin has made men tyrannical and domineering in the wrong sense² and they, in response to the woman’s unwillingness to take her role will seek to domineer her and they will be guilty of a carnal wretched God-dishonoring character. Yes, sin has fractured this relationship, but God’s purpose for it has not been overturned. In redemptive grace God wants to bring it back to the original purpose, therefore, when we turn to the scriptures we do understand our redemptive privilege and standing in Christ does not in any way warrant an overturning of the wife’s submission to her husband. Dear wives, women and girls, you’re being told, be all you can be in the Army. God says, be all you’re meant to be in Christ. Be all you’re meant to be. All the provisions of grace are available in Christ, not to raise you above distinct

feminine roles and relationships, but to give you grace to embrace them with grace and dignity. That’s what God does in Christ, to make you in that sense the full woman. The fulfilled woman. Not something other than a woman. The same way God’s grace in Christ to a man is meant to make him all that he was intended to be as a man. Not as something that is half woman and half man.

I’ve laid before you these three propositions that have brought us into contact with the great Biblical doctrines of creation, fall, and redemption. I’ve asserted that what the Bible clearly mandates concerning the wife’s submission to her husband:

1. In no way compromises her inherent, equally shared created dignity.
2. In no way exaggerates her inherited moral depravity.
3. In no way undermines her imparted redemptive standing and privilege.

As we come to 1 Peter, we must understand that embracing from the heart –and that’s the issue– embracing from the heart God’s directives. First of all to wives, there are six verses. There is just one verse to the men, but don’t be fooled by the length or the directives. There is a sense in which, to be faithful to the text, it would take far longer to get anything approaching and exhaustive exposition of verse seven than it would of verses 1 -6. As we come to these passages, we’re going to confront Christ, your professed Lord and Master saying to you in the scriptures, then we’re going to have dealings with God and His Word on two fronts. Here is my final observation and application.

We’re going to have dealings with God as a sovereign, loving wise Creator who instituted marriage as a social institution. He made them male and female. He said (oh by the way, it was God’s idea) that the man was not good to be alone. God put him to sleep. God designed the woman. God brought her to the man. All of those circumstances that we briefly considered in Genesis, upon which our Lord comments in Matthew 19 and Paul in 1 Cor 11– all of that underscores that God’s sovereign, loving, wise design for marriage as a social institution is an expression of His creative rights and will. Therefore, when we come to 1 Pet 3:1 and read the simple words, “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.” When we look at the parallel passages in Colossians and Ephesians –do you see what you’re dealing with? Every woman here –married, unmarried, hopefully someday married– you are dealing with God, your creator. That’s who you’re dealing with. God, who designed you to be a woman. And designed you with a specific role in mind in the marriage institution.

² Some sects of the Muslim culture epitomizes the tyrannical and domineering character where women are treated so poorly as less than men.

Now I ask, can anyone be a Christian who knowingly, willfully, resolutely refuses to embrace the will of God, your creator? What's your answer? Can anyone be a Christian who knowingly, willfully, resolutely refuses to embrace God in His creative rights? Furthermore, God's sovereign, loving, wise design for marriage was also that it would be a redemptive type. God designed that it would be a redemptive type. It would be a foreshadowing of His greatest work. When did redemption get launched in the mind and heart of God? After the fall or before the fall? My Bible says we were chosen in Christ before what? Before the foundation of the world.^{57:05} Paul speaks of His purpose in grace which were given us in Christ before time eternal! Redemption is no afterthought in the mind of God.

Redemption was in the mind of God when He created; when He created the male and female; and when assigned the role of head and leader to Adam; and submissive follower and helper answering to his need in Eve. God had something grander and more glorious than a social institution in which He would get glory. He had redemption in mind. A redemption in which, according to Ephesians 5, a relationship of Christ incarnate God to those who He would rescue, is the relationship of husband to wife. Of bride-groom to bride.

As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands, in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for it. Now I ask you, can someone knowingly, willfully, resolutely misrepresent redemption and be a Christian? Can someone knowingly, willfully, resolutely refuse to reflect those blessed redemptive realities and still be a Christian? Can you as a wife deliberately blur the reality of Christ's redemption and call yourself a Christian? You see, for some of you women, when we get into 1 Pet 3:1, your profession is going to be brought to an acid test and it may be that some of you are going to make the horrible discovery, that though you have not flaunted the seventh commandment and have been unfaithful to your husband—yes, when it says, thou shalt not commit adultery, you've kept your marriage bed pure. And though your tongue may not engage in false witness and you may not be gossip and a slanderer—when almighty God says wives be subject to your own husband, you say, "No way! I'll never!" My friend. My dear woman friend, I beg you to face the implications of knowing, willful, resolute refusal to do the will of God. "Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father Who is in Heaven."

The will of God for you as a wife is clear, that from the heart you embrace the will of God, which is, "Wives, be in submission to your husbands." ^{1:00:00} The same thing will be true when we come to verse 7. I seek to open up to you men what does it mean to dwell with your wives according to knowledge, laying the burden on you not to get irritated **because they think differently and react differently and their emotions are constructed differently and just blow off your wife with denigrating words and attitudes.**³ To dwell with her according to knowledge. **Whatever it means**⁴, she's the weaker vessel that's not to be the occasion of you despising her, but giving her honor as unto the weaker vessel. It will count, if you're a Christian, to know that the failure to do this will hinder your prayers. If you are a real Christian nothing scares the wits out of you more than to think that you go on your knees and heaven will be closed. For some of you men this may be the uncovering of the shoddy pseudo experience of your professed Christianity. This is serious business.

On more of a positive note, I bless God that in meditating upon these things in recent weeks in seeking to prepare for the exposition of this section, I bless God for many of you dear women who manifest a hearty embrace as far as I can discern, God alone knows your heart. You manifest not only to me, but if you heard some of the things some of your husbands say to me about you, you'd be embarrassed. Things that indicate you've embraced from the heart your noble place in the will of God. There are others of you not married that everything about you speaks that you've internalized the principles that will make it relatively easy for you to slide into your Biblical roles as husbands and as wives. If after the opening up of these things you choose to say, "No, I like what the world is telling me. I've gotta be my own person. No man is going to take a place of authority over me. I'll carve my own path. I'll construct my own notion of what it is to be a woman and wife." Let me just remind you of the scripture that says, "*The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can it be so they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" May God be pleased to use these studies perhaps to show some of you that this is the point of your real controversy with God. In showing you that that is the real point of controversy, may it be at that point you stack arms and flee to Christ and find true liberty in the Lord Jesus.

³ I don't see this language as Biblical or helpful. It seems to open the door to rationalizing a woman's behavior and for making excuses for her words and behavior that fall short of the Biblical ethic. Some will use teaching like this to undermine a husband's attempts to bring accountability to his wife.

⁴ This comment is disappointingly flippant from such a pastor as Martin..

Col 3:18 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

1Pet 3:1 "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

Titus 2:1 "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: 2 that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: 3 that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; 4 that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

1 Cor 14:34 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home . . ."

Eph 5:22 "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

1 Tim 2:12 "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."