

7. Being a wife

'For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, for you to follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, now was any deceit found in his mouth." And while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats. But kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously. And he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. – 1 Peter 2:21- 25.'

Verse 1 Chapter 3: *'In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands.'*

Now, the bible wasn't originally written with chapters, and they are a blessing to help us find things. But they sometimes cause us to read each chapter like an individual book, and because of that we miss the flow of what the author is saying. We look in verse 21: *'For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, for you to follow in his steps.'*

So Christ gave us an example, of how we ought to suffer. How should we respond when people do not treat us as they ought to? Now, the first thing it says in verse 22: *"He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth."*

Now, notice how it's talking about the mouth, the words of Christ. He did not utter anything that was wrong. Toward the people who were doing something against him.

Verse 23, it's also talking about speech: *'And while being reviled, he did not revile in return. While suffering, he uttered –spoke- no threats. But he kept entrusted himself to him who judges righteously.'*

Now look at Chapter 3 Verse 1: *'In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.'*

Do you see the connection? It's very important. Christ is suffering because people are disobedient to the word, but he commits no sin with his mouth, there's no deceit in his mouth, he does not revile, he does not threaten with his mouth; he entrusts himself to God. And then he tells wives: 'You have husbands? Who are disobedient to the word? Do the same thing, win them without a word.' Do not sin with your mouth. Do not utter any threats. Do not revile, and argue, and tear down. Do not fight with him. And that's what you do, you argue. You wound him with your tongue. You quarrel. You always have a better opinion. You're always pointing out things he does wrong. And instead of being an instrument of God to change him, you're an instrument of the devil, pushing him further away. Now, I don't want us to laugh, but look at what it's saying in verse 1. He's telling wives to win their husbands, without using their mouths. Without arguing. I have a friend who says this: 'When a woman gets in an argument with her husband, she almost always has the sharper tongue.' And it does nothing conform him to the image of Christ, it just tears him to pieces, and causes him to lose hope. He wants to stay away from you. You are like a constant dripping; it's better to live in the attic, or

in the desert, or to be at work, or to be with his friends. You will not win him, you will not draw him to you, you will not draw him to Christ, by winning arguments. That's not how you do it.

Now, hold your place for just a second, and go to the book of Romans. Chapter 12 Verse 17: *'Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right inside of all men.'* Verse 18: *'If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.'* Verse 19: *'Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," says the Lord.'*

Now, look what it says: *'Leave room for the wrath of God.'* One of the things that I've noticed about castles, almost everywhere they're built, they have a really big front door. Where 15 – 20 men, standing arm in arm, can go through the door. But when you get to the second floor, the stairwell is only about that wide. And the doorway up on the second floor is very small. And I've always wondered, why is that? Here's the reason: if there's an army attacking the castle, and there's only a few people in the castle, and they break through the great door, the great big door, then all of the people in the castle run up to the second floor. Now, it doesn't matter how big that army is on the first floor, the stairwell is only this wide. They can only go up one at a time, and one man can stand there with a spear and hold them off. That's a pretty good idea, isn't it?

Your husband's in his castle, and you're outside. You're mad. You're gonna straighten him out. You knock down the front door, he runs up to the second floor. He stands in that doorway with his spear, and you come up there with your sword, a double-edged sword coming right out of your mouth. And you're fighting him, and you're arguing with him, and you're telling him this and that, and the whole time you're doing that you're saying: 'Lord, help me! Lord, change my husband! Lord I pray hours a day! Why don't you help me?' Lord says: 'Get out of the way, you don't listen.' He says: 'Give me place, but you don't; you just keep fighting, keep arguing, keep telling him how bad he is, keep telling him all the things he does wrong; and all the while you're praying.' And God said: 'Get out of the way. You can make a choice. You can fight with him, or I can fight with him. But only one can be there at a time, and if you want to change your husband by arguing with him, then, good luck. That'll be your marriage for the rest of your life.' Or you can do what God says, and give room for Him to work on your husband. He says: 'Put your sword away.'

Let's go back to 1 Peter 3, he says: *'If any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be external, braiding the hair and wearing gold jewelry and putting on dresses. But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious inside of God.'*

You are not going to win your husband by tearing him down, you will win him with a gentle and a quiet spirit. By honoring him, even when he does not necessarily deserve to be honored. By showing him the grace of God. By showing him what Jesus has done for you. Now, women, this is true. I know it's true. It's in the bible, and I've seen it in my own life. Let's say I come home one day, there's no dinner, the house looks messed up, and I've had a bad day. Now, this never happens, I'm just giving you an example. And I say: 'Charo! Where's the..? What's going on? I've been working all day! I mean, the house is a mess! And then, where's the food? I'm hungry. And she starts going like this, (I don't know how to say this, so..) *A bunch of incomprehensible Spanish*. It's horrible! She's sounds like him! I speak Spanish and I don't even know what she's saying! She's so mad. And when she does that, the battle is on. And I feel totally justified in being angry. But if I come in the house, with that kind of attitude: 'What's going on? I mean, I'm home! I'm hungry! The house is messed up!' And I just act like I shouldn't act. And my wife comes out, and she says: 'Paul, I'm really sorry. Uhhh..' No, really. She says: 'I'm sorry. Uhhh.. There've been a lot of problems with some of the sisters in the church, Ian is sick.. Paul, just give me some time and I'll try to get things together.' If she does that, you know what happens to me? I go: 'Excuse me.' I go outside, I've got a big stick made out of

Oak, a big baseball bat, and I go like this. I am totally ashamed, my heart is broken, I realize I've acted like a fool, I ask God to forgive me, I go in and ask my wife to forgive me, and then try to help her. Do you see the power of a gentle and quiet spirit? And the way the Holy Spirit works through an obedient woman? She gets out of the way and allows God to fight her fights. When your wife starts acting right, you'd better straighten up. God's gonna kill you if you don't straighten up. Do you see, ladies? I mean, you know this is true. Every time you respond with evil, it does nothing. And you say: 'When I respond with kindness, it doesn't do anything either.' God didn't say: 'Do it' because He would fix the problem immediately, He said to: 'Do it' because that's what he commanded. And if you do it long enough, it will begin to work. My wife has so much power over me. When she has a gentle and a quiet spirit, it's unbelievable how it changes everything. Let's say he's learned some things that are in sermon and he realizes he hasn't been teaching you the Bible or he realizes that he hasn't been **disciplining** and he starts to try to do it and it fails after 2 days. And you come in there and you say: 'I knew you wouldn't carry this out very well.' Congratulations, you just nailed another nail in the coffin of your marriage, instead of saying: 'I'm really proud of you; you tried; is there any way I can help?' Being encouraged, why do we always think that we are always supposed to act like Jesus to other people who are not in our family? We should act like Jesus with our wives and our husbands first, with our children. Wife, you have such a power, to make your home a joy. Realize that you are doing it for the Lord, He can transform your family through your quiet and kind spirit. It's true. Let me ask you a question. You've been married for a while, you've done a lot of arguing. Has it helped anything? Has it made your husband a better man? Has it made your marriage more beautiful? What kind of example did you set for your daughter? What kind of example did you set for your son? Some women say, my children don't submit to me. And I ask them do you submit to your husband? My children complain all the time! Do you complain all the time? You see? This is very important. Extremely. I would recommend 2 books in English and Chinese. One is the Exemplary Husband by Stewart Scott, and the other is an Excellent Wife by Martha Peace. It's a book worth translating, both the books are worth translating in Chinese if they're not there. Because both books are basically talking about our greatest problem is that we're not like Jesus. Marriage is our one opportunity to act out Christ's love for the church. When I love my wife, my children can say this; "Oh, so that's how Christ loved the church." When my wife submits to me with a gentle and quiet spirit, my children say; "Oh, that's how the church is supposed to treat Jesus." AS men, we know we fail. The world tells us we fail all the time. We know that we're not movie stars. We know we're not strong. We know we don't make a lot of money. We know by the world's standards we're nothing. It's helpful to not hear the same things from your wife. This is the man that God's given you. And although He—although God loves you as a daughter, He also loves his son. He loves his son. You can help form his son into a better man. Or you can chase him away, from you and from God. And leave him miserable and without hope. Your husband is going to fail as a husband. I failed as a husband. You failed as a wife. But if we adopt the attitude; the mind of Christ, things will change. See, your greatest problem is my greatest problem. We're just not like Jesus, but we can become more and more like Jesus. Make a commitment. In the church, the men should make a commitment to one another; to help one another to become better husbands, and better fathers. Wives ought to make a commitment to one another; to help each other become better wives and mothers. There's so much more to say here, we just don't have time. Tomorrow, we're going to teach on two things, hopefully. We'll teach on children; the parent's responsibility to a child, and the child's responsibility to a parent. And then I'm going to teach on the atonement; on Christ's death. Because I want to make it very clear that you understand what truly happened on that Cross. What it means, that God crushed his own son. That God loosed his own sword upon his own son. So that you might be saved. I think I've preached something like 6-7 times today. I have to apologize, but I'm extremely tired, so I'm going to be going. But uh, you are welcome back tomorrow. God bless you.