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SPEAKER

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Between Two Worlds

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11

TITLE

Men Who Hope In God

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 3:7



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Well, Providence family, it's so good to see you. For those of you who are at home or in the room, as well as our guests, if you are new with us, we're thrilled that you've joined us. To those who are fathers, I hope this is just a wonderful day for you. I hope it's encouraging even our time. On behalf of all of humanity and your family, I just want to thank you. Even the small sacrifices, the prayers that you made, the toys that you may have fixed, the work that you've done, the encouragement, instruction, the sacrifice, we as the people, we simply say thank you, we're grateful. It changes, not only at home, it changes culture when people are faithful.

For every act of faithfulness, I just want to say thank you. I know and you know that a mom and dad shadow, it stretches so far that families tend to walk in that shade for the rest of their life. That shade can be positive, and it can be very negative. The fact is that every single one of us on the basis of our parents, that's influenced the rest of our days. It's influencing your life even now. As a result of that, we come to a day like this day, Father's Day, and we feel different things about it. For some in the room, it's really a sweet day, and for some it's a really sour day. Let me encourage us, let me pray, and let's go to our perfect Father and ask for help.

Father in heaven, we do love you, and we thank you for your grace in our life, and we come to you today when we think about fathers and we've never had a father like you. You are the one who is perfect in every way, faithful to every promise. You are there. You are there for us to run to, and when we run to you, you prove yourself strong on our behalf. That you're our rock and our refuge, you protect and you defend, and for those attributes that we see, imperfectly but persistently in people we call dad, we just say thank you. For those who are burdened today, whether it's in their own fathering or their own home, or the father that they had, or now maybe this, we simply lay the day before you and we lay our lives before you and ask that you would fill those gaps with grace.

We look to you now as we open your word that you would speak to us, that you would work in such a way that you would demonstrate the power of your spirit. I ask that you would do things by your spirit in this moment that only your spirit can do, that to convince and challenge and correct, to give life, to take words that can fell one dimensional, and would you add color and life and power and strength to our hearts to be able to absorb, take and apply this to our life. We do worship you, we acknowledge you as the king overall, and we sit before you and your word, and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. In your Bible, if you want to turn with me to First Peter, we're in a series. We're up to chapter three verse seven.

The reason we're there today is because last week we finished in chapter three verse six, and so it just happens to be next. It's also planned in the sense that it really speaks very directly to men. But its principles can be applied to everyone in the room, married or single, male or female. It's important to remember just a few things about First Peter. If you're new, it was written by a man named Peter. He was a follower of Christ, and he's writing Christians who were persecuted, who were citizens of heaven and yet they're citizens of Rome, and Rome is unsympathetic and hostile to their faith, to the gospel of Christ, to Christ himself. They're confused, and they're wondering how are we supposed to live when we know that we're citizens of heaven, and yet we live in a place where people don't affirm the things that we know are true?

How are we supposed to live, in particular if they're hostile towards us because of our faith in Christ? The book of First Peter, it's like a play, where there's three different scenes or three different acts, right? Scene one, he says, "Okay, if you need to understand how it is you're supposed to live in between these two worlds, the first thing you need to understand is that when Christ died and rose and you trusted in him, that you received a new identity." For a chapter and a half, he's talked about who we are in Christ as a result of grace. A new identity, that motivates new behavior. Then you get into act or scene two, and what he wants to do then is to say, "Now, this is who you are, but you live in this broken busted up world, and the next thing you need to understand is that God has called you to live exemplary lives, in particular in the area of love."

To live differently than the world. That the culture that you live in, in Rome or now in Raleigh, that's unsympathetic to the gospel and growing even more so, they're not going to read a Bible, but they are going to read you. They're going to read your integrity, they're going to read your life, your leadership, how you love people, how you treat people, they're going to read you and they're going to make some determination. The second scene, it begins with an appeal, and the appeal is in chapter two verse 12, and there he says, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that He visits."

The idea here that he has in mind is this, is that there are people, Gentiles, unbelievers, who do not know the hope of Christ and they mock him. His instructions in act two is live in such a way. In these different arenas of life, he's going to drop chapter two verse 12 into civil duty and in the marketplace, and then in marriage in the home. He's going to say, "Live in such a way so that even today, if they're mocking you, one day they're going to praise Christ." This is what he says, starting in verse seven. He says, "Likewise, husbands live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as a weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

Now, within this one verse, you actually find and you can see them by the use of the commas, five different phrases. I'm going to attempt, over the next 28 to 29 minutes, to give a five minutes sermon on the one verse, okay? The first thing that he calls us to do, and it's very important, is that Christ calls husbands to submit to their wives. That might sound wrong. You might think, "Wait a minute, I'm pretty sure there's a place in the Bible where it says wives submit to your husbands." There is, and we'll read that. But the New Testament also tells us, and this is one of the places, that Christ has called husbands to submit to their wives. Now, think of the context of what he's done.

For a chapter and a half, now for two chapters, he said this. He said that when we trusted Christ, we actually received a higher king. That because of Christ, we have a higher king than any king on the earth. His name is Jesus, and we have a higher authority than any law on the earth, and that's the Bible, and we have a citizenship in heaven that supersedes even the important citizenships that we have here on the earth. But this reality of knowing that we live in a higher plane, that we have higher privileges, it can create this false mistaken sense of superiority, to where we feel like that we can treat people and we can simply litter in the civil duty and in

the home, and because this is in our home and this is in our king and this is in our leader and this is in our law.

We live on a higher plane, and so he wants to take care, to say, "Wait a minute, it's very possible for even a Christian to mistake, in all of this teaching, that we live in a higher place and citizenship in heaven, and as a result of that, to walk around this place as though we're superior to other people." But there is a driving burden in the heart of Peter, that if you don't share this driving burden, he will offend you repeatedly. Anyone who teaches his word, this book, God's word, will also offend you repeatedly, and this is this binding conclusion and drive within his heart, it's this, Peter wants more than anything else for people to see Jesus. What that means is if your life mission and the purpose of your days is anything other than that, you're living for a lesser cause.

Even if that cause is instructed from God, from the Bible, for you to pour yourself into something, even then, the primary cause is I need Jesus to be seen. Because when people see him, they see that he is the most consequential, relevant king of heaven and earth, and he will be king forever and ever and ever, and those who trust him will be with him forever, and those who don't, they will suffer hell forever. This is what's on Peter's heart. He wants people to see Christ. If you're primary passion, even if it's driven from scriptural intent, is that America is great or that you must defend your amendment or your rights or your affluence or your privileges, and you create that as the mission of your life instead of making Christ visible to people who now mock him because they can't see him, and Peter says, "Not only am I going to offend you, but you're living for a cause that is not worth the preciousness of your limited number of days."

The question that I would start with here is this is, is the driving concern of your heart and your days that Jesus would be seen by people today who cannot see him? You see, this is what motivates Peter's talk. This whole point comes from the word likewise. Likewise, husbands. Like what? Let me tell you like what. In chapter two verse 21, he had said to us, he says, "Look, Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps." Then he says, "Look, he was reviled but he didn't revile in return, he was threatened but he didn't threaten in return. Instead, he entrusted himself to the Father, who judges justly." Then after explaining that he gives us life for us, he says, "Now let's get back to some of the examples."

In chapter three verse one, what does he say? He says, "Likewise, wives." Again, here in chapter three verse seven, "Likewise, husbands." You see, when you see this ... When you see Christ, that he suffered for us leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps, don't you understand that there was nobody in the history of the world who is as superior as Jesus, who's walked this earth, and yet nobody has submitted his very life for people in need like Jesus? Think about what he did. He looked down from heaven, and he saw that we were distanced from him, that we had a need, and so he denied himself all kinds of things. The first thing he denied himself is the comfort and adoration of heaven. He left heaven, come to this earth. He traded in perfect Son of God for accusations from human beings created by his hands.

Then he moves even further. This is the creator of the universe who speaks everything into existence. He comes to the earth, and what does he do? He yields, even some of his own divine prerogatives, his divine initiatives, his sovereign power on the earth. I know that he did miracles, and so he did God things on the earth. But he did a lot of things where he said, "I'm not going to, in this moment ... I'm not going to make furniture as a carpenter like God, I'm going to make it like man. I'm going to use hammer and nails." He could thought a chair together. He was God. But he set it aside because he said, "I want to live in this place, I'm going to become a baby and wear a diaper."

God in a diaper, in order to meet your need. That's submission. You keep fast forwarding, and all of a sudden, the night before he's on the cross, he's with his 12 disciples, and they all have dirty feet. You know what they're arguing about at dinner? Who's the greatest disciple? Who's the superior one? The most superior one, what does he do? He takes off his garments, he puts on a towel and he goes and he begins washing. He didn't want to put his hands all over those nasty feet. But what did he do? He denied his own sensibilities as a human being. He says, "This is a need you have, and I'm willing to lay my rights down for you in this moment." Then he gets to the garden.

There he gets to the garden and he begins talking to the father about a cup that he doesn't want to drink. See, the Bible talks about the fact that when we sin against God, He's holy and we're sinners. Therefore, His holiness erupts with wrath towards every sin. That wrath is stored up. Ephesians says His wrath is being stored up for the Day of Judgment, is waiting. You're going to have to drink that cup of God's wrath for your sin unless someone would drink it for you. God sent His Son. He didn't want to. He said, "Let this cup pass from me. I don't want to drink that wrath." Yet, he says, "But not my will, but your will be done," and there he goes to the cross. Here's the question. Christ is not on the cross today, and so people can't see this.

The question is this, how will people see this? If they're not going to read the Bible, if they can't go to Jerusalem and see this because he's not there right now, how are they going to see? Peter says, "He submitted in order to serve, leaving you an example that you might follow in his steps," and then he says, "All right, now let's apply this to marriage." Wives, likewise. Like what? Like Christ. He gets the verse seven, "Husbands, likewise." Like what? Like Christ. This is not new to Peter. Ephesians five says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. And husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church."

In other words, out of reverence for Christ, a husband and a wife, who both love Christ, they're both called the submit to one another. Husband to wife, wife to husband. It looks different in each of their lives, but it's submission in two directions. This is what his will is for you and me, and then what he does, right? In the rest of this verse, after the word likewise, being like Jesus and humbling himself for the good of other people. He's going to say, "Husbands, how do you apply? How do you submit to your wife?" He tells us four more things. That's the second point, ready? Second point, Christ calls husbands to be considerate of their wives. To be considerate of their wives. I just love how Jesus understands this to the core.

He knows why you do everything you do. He knows every mode of every thought, every the intention of the heart, everything. He knows you. If you are in a relationship with somebody who understands you, and husbands are supposed to be like Christ, then it makes sense that Peter would say to live in a understanding way. Live with. It's actually one word in the Greek, two compounds. Words that are put together. It means dwell together. Dwell together with your wife in an understanding way. This is really important. You grasp this, right? This doesn't mean that you live in a place with a wife. It means that you live together with your wife. Those are two different things. One of them is focused on location where people are assembling, one of them is togetherness.

One of them, the husband and wife live in the same house and pass at night. Another is they're together. Their life is together. In other words, what he's saying is this, is that when you husbands perceive distance, you're on one side of a chasm and she's on the other, and you know that you're separated, you know that there's a drift, then you don't live unto yourself on your edge of the canyon, you build a bridge like Jesus. Remember Jesus? The one who became flesh and dwelt among us, not just to live on the earth, but to be together with us? What I found in almost 24 years of marriage ... If you're brand new at marriage, let me tell you something that you may not know.

Marriage is a lot of wonderful things. One of the things is this, marriage is a perpetual bridge-building activity. Sometimes it's sin that causes us to be on opposite sides of the canyon. Sometimes it's unpredictability, sometimes it's selfishness. Sometimes it's not sin. Sometimes you don't need to know why. Sometimes it's busyness, it's priorities of life, where you're simply not connecting with one another, you're not talking to one another. There's a drift and a distance between the two. Marriage is literally something to where you constantly have to build bridges back together. Husbands, look, one of the ways you submit to your wife is you constantly build a bridge when you feel far.

You keep building more bridges. Sometimes you feel like you just finished a bridge. All right, I went on a date, we had a great conversation, and all of a sudden the next day, you need another bridge. Just bridges everywhere. But he says, "Live with her in an understanding way." Well, okay, how do I know? How do I know when I need to build a bridge? That's this next phrase, live with your wife in an understanding way. The word understanding means knowledge. It's according to knowledge. We use the word considerate, and sometimes we use the word considerate as a synonym for kindness. Oh, he's just so considerate. What we mean is kind. Considerate is different. Considered is somebody has considered something and then they're living in response to what they've considered.

This is what he says, this is how you live together, this is how you build bridges, is that you consider things. You see, Peter has gone out of his way to show us time and again that Christians do not bloom into roses in a bed of ignorance. He keeps telling us to gird up our mind with the truth of God, to keep thinking about what is right. What should you consider? Well, consider God. Consider God's character. Then when you think about her, you consider her, you consider she was made in the image of that God. Considered God's word

and what God's word has to say about relationships and how to treat one another. Consider your mutual sin problem, and how when you behave in certain ways that it's easy to respond in ways that are not all that healthy.

Consider her needs, her wants, her fears, her dreams, her hopes. Consider her tolerance to pain, hunger, cold, and thirst. When you know she's going to be hungry and you know how she responds normally when she's hungry, you should consider that. Consider. Consider seeds and harvest. What does that mean? Well, the Bible says, "Whatever one sows that will he also reap." Now [inaudible 00:21:33] is this, is whatever seed you planted to the ground, there's the corresponding harvest. At any given time, husbands or wives, you can look at where you're at in your marriage right now and say, "This is what it feels like to be in my marriage right now." Then if you are wise, you won't simply say, "I don't like this," or, "I like this."

You will then look back over the last two, three, four months and imagine and remember the different kinds of seeds that were planted in the ground, because those seeds have a corresponding harvest that you're now reaping. If what you like is good, look back and go, "You know what? Man, we spent a lot of time together. We've had a lot of conversations. We've gone on a date once a week for all these weeks." Well, all of those were seeds, they were healthy. Consider those things. If things aren't so healthy, you should consider what is it ... If I don't trust him right now, why don't I trust him right now? There's always seeds that create the harvest.

But here's another thing, a wise person will not only look back at the seeds they put in the ground, they'll begin to imagine the kind of harvest they want, and they'll begin to put new seeds into the ground today. Say, "I don't feel all that close right now, all that trusting right now. What would build trust? Well, I'm going to make promises and I'm going to keep them. I'm going to be a person of integrity. I'm going to communicate with the intent to connect." A husband will consider these things. A wife will as well, but a husband has been called to. Then you live according to the knowledge that you've considered.

I remember years ago, early in our marriage, two years in our marriage, I used to love basketball. I like it now. I loved it then, and I loved the team. I would watch all the games, I knew all the players, I knew their tendencies. At the very end of this one game, we're sitting next to each other. There's no kids even in the house because none of our kids on the earth, right? We have no kids yet. We're just watching, and it's a really close, somebody gets fouled, there's two free throws, and she says, "What's going to happen?" I said, "Well, he's going to miss the first and he's going to make the second." Now me saying that, and the fact that it happened ... I'm not a prophet, right? It's not like I just say things and things happen, right?

I had studied and simply by watching over and over and over and over. I begin to see different tendencies, and as a result of that, you can start to anticipate what they're going to do, what's most likely is going to happen in this case. That's when she said something that we still talked about today. She said, "I want you to know me like you know those players." I said, "Okay, loud and clear. Got that one." Here's the point, study her and then keep studying her, and you know why you need to keep studying her? Because she changes. So do

you. We change throughout our life. You have to keep studying her and then apply that knowledge of what you have considered in building a bridge, and this is one way that you submit to your wife.

The third thing, Christ calls husbands to use their strength to serve. You see this in the next phrase. I know that there are physically strong women in the world. Sometimes a woman can be stronger than a man. I know that. But typically, a man within the home is stronger than his wife. That's not an insult. That's anatomical reality. Peter is referring to that when he says, "Show honor to the woman as the weaker vessel." In other words, if we put a bench press up here, and we brought man and wife up here, most of us would assume and then we will be confirmed that the husband in that relationship was able to lift more weight. It's not always the case. But physically, it's assumed, and that's what he's saying here.

But why is he saying this? This is so important. Listen carefully. This is not an insult. This is actually a gift, and this is why. You see, God created each one of us, male and female with gifts. All of us, we all have gifts. God intended to use those gifts in such a way so that they harmonize with other people's gifts and weaknesses, so that where one person is strong and other person is weak, the person who's strong is able to compensate and help the person who's weak. In your marriage, you have strengths and your spouse has strengths. In your friendships, you have strengths, your friends have strengths. That's just the reality of life. God sowed strengths into the ground and they blossom over time.

But then what happened was we sinned. We sinned against God. Once we sinned against God, we have this capacity because our soul, our very heart was reconstituted so that the ethic that was in the Garden of Eden, that ethic was my life for your good, my strength for your good, it was replaced with your life for my good, and if you won't give it, then I'm going to take my strength to manipulate and exploit you until you give it. That's what sin does. Sin takes where you're strong and manipulates where other people are weak, and you use them, objectify them. What Peter's saying here is this, he says, "Look, once Christ came to the earth, what we saw is, once again, for the very first time, a perfect model of what it looks like to use strengths to serve other people."

He says, "Look, husbands, like Christ did, show honor." Identify your strength, if it's physical, great. Physically, care for her with that physical strength. Honor her with that physical strength. If it's something else, fine. What's interesting is it's not all about strength. That's why this is amazing to me. It's also about having the ability and the vision to recognize honorable distinction in others. This is what I mean. This is how I get here. You see the words to the woman? Now some of us, we look at that and it's translated as though woman is the noun. To the woman. A person, place or thing. Husbands, there's the woman, honor her, right? It's kind of what he says, but now what he says is. This is why I know that.

What Peter does is he uses something that's hard to translate in our normal English language. He uses an adjective. An adjective describes the noun, okay? The noun is a woman, but this word woman is actually in the Greek where it was first written. It's the adjective. In other words, what it says is to the womanly, to the

feminine. Why that's so important is because if we had a bench press up here and you got up here and you lifted 200 pounds, and your wife and another man in the room could only lift 100 pounds, honorable distinction says that you're still supposed to treat your wife and that other dude differently. It's not just about strength. It's recognizing femininity is a grace.

It's been given to women as a gift to reflect the softer facets of God's character. In other words, he's saying she's special. You go to our office right now, you're going to find books everywhere. There's all kinds of shelves of books. But there's a fire, and I have time to go get only one. You see, only one book, you only get one. This is the one. You know why? Because this book is honorably distinct from all the rest. Husbands, there's a lot of human beings on the earth and your wife is honorably distinct from all the rest. Men, there's a lot of people on the earth and women because of their femininity are honorably distinct. They're special. They're not better. They're equal in dignity and personhood, but they're different.

Let me just encourage. No matter how confused the world gets, and indeed how confused some women get, godly men will continue to honor women because she's honorably distinct. We'll continue to open the doors, we'll continue to walk streetside when we're walking down the sidewalk. If our boat goes down, there's one place left in the lifeboat, she gets it. You know why? It's not because you swim better. It's because she's honorably distinct. Four thing, how do we submit? Christ calls husbands to view their wives as fellow heirs. You have to understand that this time when firstborn males received an inheritance, they were the only ones who received the inheritance.

How groundbreaking was it for Peter to say, "Since they are heirs with you of the grace of life." You see, Peter's taught us in chapter one verse four that when we trusted Christ, that we received an inheritance that will never perish for their fate. It's kept in heaven for us. Now Peter says if your wife is a Christian, she has that inheritance too. You don't understand how groundbreaking this is because we live in a culture that's so unlike the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire actually had a law that we talked about last week that literally translated father power in the home. The father had absolute authority over everything and every one.

What he's saying is this, in that culture, just imagine in that culture where he has everything, he says, "Do you see that woman? In the kingdom of God and heaven forever, she will be an equal, and so you need to start treating her like an equal now." In other words, she's an heiress of the kingdom of God. Man, if you're married to a Christian, you're married to a queen and you aren't the king. A queen. See, vision motivates sacrifice, which is why in Proverbs 31, when he describes what an excellent wife looks like, he begins an excellent wife who can find she is far more precious than jewels.

You know what that means? That means a husband will treat a wife significantly better when he sees her as more valuable than all of his money and all the treasures in life. You see, how you see your wife will affect how you treat your wife. How you think about your wife, how you talk to your wife, how you talk about your wife to your friends, how you talk about your wife to God Himself. How you consider her interest as more

significant than yourself. How you submit out of reverence for Christ. The last thing Christ calls us to love for the sake of our prayers. He calls us, really all of us, but in particular husbands, he calls us to love for the sake of our prayers.

Some people look at this and they go, “Well, because Peter doesn’t really explain why he says this. He just lays it there and he moves on, then maybe he means when you’re upset with your husband or your wife, it’s really hard to pray together,” and it’s true, that hinders your prayers. You got to breach in that relationship, you probably don’t spend as much time praying together as you could or would like to. But I don’t believe that’s what he means, and this is why. When Peter talks about, and Paul, that loving our wives as Christ loved the church is an act of obedience. It means that not loving our wives as Christ loved the church is a sin, and sin breaks our fellowship with God. It doesn’t break your relationship with God. It simply interrupts that fellowship with God.

What Peter does is he incentivizes everything that he said at the very end with a sentence. I want you to do this, I want you to be considerate. Use your strength to serve, view her as an air. This is why. So your prayers won’t be hindered. Peter assumes that we care about praying and he seems that we care that God wants to answer our prayers. Peter was absolutely consumed with living in a way that protected his prayers. We’re going to see this as we keep marching through the letter, but just notice what he says. Next week, we’ll look at verse 12. He says, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their prayer. They’re open to their prayer, “But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

The insinuation is His ears are going to be closed to those who are not upright. Then he slams the deal and he goes, look at chapter four verse seven, “Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” Do you know that means? It means that God has this incredible openness to the prayers of the upright, and interestingly, an incredible openness to men who treat their wife with love. We would all assume this. We know this in human relationships. If you mistreat your wife in front of her dad, what favor do you anticipate receiving from him? If you mistreat an heiress in front of the kingdom and in front of the King of kings, then what favor do you anticipate to receive from Him?

I know that some of these things they cause us guilt, regret, fear. [inaudible 00:35:19] encourage you to take comfort. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Because of the grace of God that’s poured out through Jesus Christ on the cross, when we confess our sins to God, and sometimes to our wife, and when we repent, that there is forgiveness and there’s restoration with God to where He will hear your prayers. Let me just encourage you for the sake of your prayers and your marriage or your friendship, or whatever relationship you’re seeking to apply these principles to. I encourage you to act quickly. For the sake of your prayers and for that relationship, act quickly.

Before we pray and sing and let me just leave you with a few applications. I like to do this at the end, normally at the messages. First, husbands and wives, let me encourage you to reduce the headwind by submitting to

one another. We talked last week that a respected man, a man who feels respected is more inclined to love and a loved woman is more inclined to submit or to respect. The flip side is also true. A disrespected man is disinclined to love that person who's disrespecting him, and an unloved woman is disinclined to respect the man who's not loving her. We're all sinners, and so we're going to get in each other's way. There's lots of headwind, and so what are we supposed to do? Reduce the headwind, by turning that rock in the opposite direction.

Something happens to you, and all of a sudden you want to rebound by that same level of disrespect or a lack of love of what you've just received, well, then it's only going to motivate more of that. Someone has to reverse course. Someone has to say, "I'm going to treat you not as you're treating me, but as I wish you were treating me." Treat others as you wish to be treated, remember? Let me encourage men, let's submit to our wives by serving them, studying them, considering them, protecting them, prioritizing and building bridges to them. Wives, let me encourage you to submit and respect your husbands by following when you can, affirming where you can, and living in a way that garners this desire to live respectfully.

Second, men, let me encourage us to be considerate of the honorable distinction in a woman. Every woman, they are equal in dignity, personhood and eternal inheritance, and yet they are honorably distinct, and this distinction should be seen, it should be considered and it should be applied with wisdom and showing honor. Let's keep opening the door. Even if it's not received well, keep opening the door. Third, women, let me encourage you to receive appropriate expressions of honor from men. What does that mean? It means say thank you when he opens the door. Say thank you when you see an act of courtesy, an act of service, an act of godly initiative towards you.

If there's a man in your life, affirm. Affirm the men in your life who are pursuing Christ, pursuing Christ-like character, who are seeking to submit to Christ, and submit to you out of reverence for Christ. The last thing is something that I just can't leave these kinds of passages without saying, and it's for everyone, and it's simply this, let me encourage you to put your trust in Christ who yielded his life for you. I realized that we can leave the room and go, "That was nice. That was a little thing on marriage." If you don't know Christ and you have a healthy marriage, then you're going to go to hell after having a healthy marriage. That's not a win. The Bible says that we've sinned against a holy God and His wrath is against us.

That Christ has absorbed all the wrath for us, but it's only applied to people who put their faith and trust in him. Nobody is ever submitted to you like Jesus, and nobody's ever walked this earth with more greatness than Jesus. He loves you. If you're looking at all this and saying, "You know what? That's the kind of person that's different. That's a man who's treated me different than any other man has ever treated me," it's because it's true. That's exactly who Jesus is. The Bible says that if you'll put your faith in him, by admitting you need him, by believing in him, confessing your belief, then he will forgive you of your sin. He will bring you into a relationship with him and he will bring you to heaven.

Subsequently, he will strengthen you with his spirit to be able to apply the very principles that your marriage and relationships need the most. I urge you, I urge you to put your faith in Christ. Before we sing this morning, I want to give you opportunity to think, to consider. It seems a good thing, right? To be considerate, to consider some things, to pray about some things, to ask God for some help and some things. In a moment, I'm just going to give you some time to just quiet for all of us, and say, "Okay, this is what I've heard, God, this is what I'm thinking. Would you help me in this?" At the end of that prayer time, two men will be walking out I think somewhere.

Archie and Gary, here they are. We've asked them to simply pray for you. Okay? One of these men spends their entire life seeking to counsel men and women, but in particular, in the area of marriage. It's Archie. Then the small one over on the side, Gary, I feel so safe right now. He played football and he spends his time, his life call, it's amazing, is to help dads to be dads. We've asked them, because of their investment of their life in these areas of husbands and dads, to simply pray a prayer of blessing over you. Before we do that, let's pause and give you time to consider. (silence)

Father we come to you, thanking you for your word that draws us back to you every time. I thank you for Brian as he shares your words and faithfully every week. Father, you have given us this passage to help us understand more about how to be the husband that you would have us be. Father, I realize that we go into marriage and we don't know what we're doing. We try to do marriage our way and we fail. When we turn to your way, it always works. Father, I pray that we'll be found faithful, as we seek to understand our wife and live with her with that understanding.

Father, I pray that we'll be found faithful to the covenant which you have given us, this gift of marriage, and the promise that we made. May we be found faithful to love her as Christ loves the church. May we learn that more and be able to experience it better every day. May we be found faithful in honoring her, and may we be found faithful as we cherish her as that precious jewels. Father, I pray that you will bless every husband here and everyone will be a husband, that you'll empower them to live such a life as a husband with their bride, that the world around them will come to know you as they reveal the mystery of Christ in the church. Father, pour your blessings on the each of us as husbands.

Father God, we thank you so much for the distinct role of being a father. God, we thank you that for every father who is here, Lord, that they have the opportunity to walk out how you first loved us. God, I'm so grateful through your word how you continuously show us your love for us, and God that as fathers we can emulate that, Lord, we can walk that out. Even in good days, bad days, indifferent days, whatever the case may be, Lord, help us to know and to feel just how much you love us, and then we operate out of that love.

God, I'm grateful that we have this day to honor fathers, and God, whether this day brings joy, whether it brings grief, whether it brings confusion, whether it brings a ton of different emotions, God, help us to know that you love us. Help us to understand how much you love us, and each and every day walk that out as

being fathers. Even for those who desire to be fathers, Lord, give a healthy view of fatherhood through the Scriptures. God, we just thank you. Thank you for this time, Lord. I pray that you protect us, that you keep us, that you guide us, and Father God, that you will bless each and every father that is here today. God, we ask all these things in your precious son's name, Jesus Christ, amen.

Amen.



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