

Well let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus Chapter 2. Titus Chapter 2 and we're coming back to verses 4 and 5, a message I started last week called Young And In Love. If you remember, Titus 2 is working through Paul's instruction to several groups of people. And we have looked at what Paul wants to say to older men, we have looked at what Paul wants to say to older women, and now we're looking at what Paul wants to say to younger women through older women. So, stand in honor of God's word. We'll just read the first five verses and then I'm going to look at verses four and five, picking up where we left off last week.

I'm reading from the New King James Translation of God's eternal and in inherent word. Paul writing to Titus, "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine, that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith in love and in patience. The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. That they admonish the younger women, or young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

So reads God's word and you may be seated. Howard Hendricks taught at Dallas Theological Seminary for many years. He also developed leaders across the world, and he would often say to those sitting under his ministry, "My concern for you in life is not that you will fail, but that you will succeed in doing the wrong things." That's quite an insight. What Howard Hendricks wants us to reflect on is this: it would be better to fail at the right things than to succeed at the wrong things.

His concern wasn't that people would fail, but that they would succeed outside the will of God. And so as we come back to Chapter 2, we're going to be helped here because if we take what Howard Hendricks has said seriously, you and I will spend a little bit of time asking ourselves, "Are we doing the right things? Is our life on track? Are we living within the circle of God's will as it's revealed in the Bible?"

Titus 2 helps us greatly in that, because Paul writes to Titus and tells him, "Hey, speak the things which accord with or are proper for sound doctrine. I want you to instruct the people about how they ought to live in a way that reflects the Gospel." And then he gets specific and so he tells older men, "This is what you need to do." Then he speaks to older women and he says, "This is what you need to do." And starting last week we started to look at verses 4 and 5 because there he speaks to young women about what they ought to do.

You and I need to succeed in doing the right things and Titus 2 helps us to do that. It gives us job descriptions as older men, older women, younger women, younger men. So I want to come back to the verses we started to look at. And I would suggest to you that what we have here in Titus 2, verses 4 to 5, is a description for young women of a life that matters to God. A life that accords with sound doctrine, a life that is indeed within his will. In fact, I would suggest to you what you've got in Titus 2, verses 4 and 5, is an explanation of Genesis 2, verse 18.

We go back to the story of the beginning of humanity and history, and there Adam is brought together with Eve, and Eve is described as someone comparable to Adam. Someone his equal. Someone made in the image of God to reflect God's glory through her femaleness, but she's also described as his helper. That she's going to come under her husband and alongside her husband as he leads her, and she's going to help him fulfill God's will for him and for them. It's not really expanded on, and so I'm going to suggest that Titus 2, verses 4 to 5, goes quite a bit along the way to explaining what it means to be a helper as a wife to your husband.

Here's what matters to God, and here's what ought to matter to you. Now we saw last time, that this text is one that will be maligned and mocked in our culture. We're looking at a text in God's word that is antithetical to what's going on in progressive society outside these walls. We made ourselves aware of that. This text is anathema to the feminists, to the egalitarian, to a progressive society. Here's a text that distinguishes gender roles. This is a text that tells a young wife to submit to her own husband. They have different roles and functions.

Here's a text that elevates the home and motherhood over career. Where these young women are called to be homemakers. Here's a text that elevates and values sexual purity, not promiscuity. Here's a text that argues for self-denial, not self-fulfillment. And here's a text that puts the husband in the driver's seat. I mean this is a text that drives the feminists crazy. This is a page in the Bible they want to tear out. And given that reality, I want to remind you as we study it again this morning, that this is a text that will test the courage and fidelity of this church.

Are we willing to live this? Are we willing to obey the text of God's word? Because it's our conviction that what we have in Titus 2, verses 4 and 5, is not Greek or Roman law. It's God's law. It's an extension and an explanation of Genesis 2, verse 18, which is God's created order for both men and for women. So let's come back, start to look at this, a message I called Young And In Love. We saw that these young women, I've got several things that they're encouraged to embrace and to follow. We tried to put it in an outline form. We see her counsel, her care, her chastity, her commitment, her competence, her compliance, her concern.

That's a lot, so we better get going. Now last week we looked at the first thought, and that's about as far as we got. We looked at her counsel. And the first thought is this, that these young women, these young wives, ought to seek the input and instruction of older women and older wives, because Paul says to the older women, "You know what, you need to admonish the young women to love their husbands and to love their children." And I'm not going to go back over that other than to say that younger women ought to seek the wisdom of older women.

That will help them greatly to navigate a motherhood, and womanhood, and discipleship. So let's pick up where we left off, her counsel, talking about this young woman that's being addressed. Secondly her care, her care or her love. The older women are not only to urge them to be teachable, the older women are to urge them to be devoted wives and mothers. You'll notice here that they're called to love their husband's and love their children. The Greeks' interesting ladies, it says this, be a husband lover and be a children lover. That ought to mark every godly woman. They ought to be husband lovers and children lovers if that's where they're at in life.

It's in the present tense. It's ongoing. It's habitual. It's relentless. You kind of step back because Paul's commanding this. This is a command. This is an instruction. This is behavior that accords with sound doctrine. The Gospel produces this. But you could step back and go, "You know what, but this is what wives and mothers do." At least in the best of circumstances. Do you really need to tell a wife to love her husband? Isn't that why she married him in the first place? Do you need to tell a mother who's got this nesting, nurturing instinct that God has gifted her with, do you really need to tell a mother to love that little baby that she nurses at her breast?

Why would you command this, Paul? Let me read a commentary that I think will help us here. It's by John Kitchen, and he says this, "It is instructive that women must be taught to love their husbands and to love their children. These apparently are not naturally obtained disciplines. And they are just that, a

discipline, for they are part of what the apostles intended by self-discipline life that grows out of a self-disciplined mind." In Titus's day, marriages were often arranged and love was an acquired thing. Now whether that's what Titus is addressing, the fact is that you know what, there is natural affection. Okay?

There is romance and things that bring us together where emotionally we're attracted to other people, but you and I can run out of natural affection very quickly. You can be several years in a marriage and a few months into mothering, and that natural affection can get exhausted or tested. And what Paul wants to remind us is that love, at its heart for the Christian, it's more than a puppy love. It's more than an emotion. It can actually be taught, acquired, learned, because you know what, it's something that the Holy Spirit produces and it's something that is forged at the foot of the cross of Calvary.

You know, marriage will test our love. You've heard me say it many times before how Ruth Bell Graham, the wife of Billy Graham, was asked did she ever think about divorcing him, she said, "Divorce, no. Murder, yes." You can understand that. We said last week if you went into their home in North Carolina there was a little plaque on the wall that said, "God loves you, and I'm trying." And then this text, is addressing that. Of course there's this natural affection, there's this first love. There's those, you know, common just natural things that hold people together, but on top of that, alongside that, in the middle of that, infusing that, must come this love that God produces in the heart of the Christian, that's a mature love forged at Calvary and one produced by the Holy Spirit.

Let me give you a verse just to think that out. Listen to Romans 5, verse 5, what do we read... But the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we are still sinners, Christ died for us.

See that's a love I think that connects to Titus 2, verse 4. Teach the women, command the women, urge the women to be husband lovers, to be children lovers, and this is something beyond natural affection. 2 Timothy 3, verse 3, talks about natural affection and talks about the fact that in the last days even that will be absent. People will be unlovely, absent of natural affection. But alongside natural affection, the Christian has supernatural affection, and we marry those two. Beneath our natural affection there is the foundation of supernatural affection. A love that's measured by God's love for us, and Christ, the selflessness of Jesus, the sacrifice of Jesus.

The price he was willing to pay to serve the purposes of God, and that informs our love and the Holy Spirit produces that. Pours that into our hearts and generates that in us when we are exhausted of natural love. So this is a love for all seasons. It's a love that can survive autumn and winter in relationships. It's not simply an emotion that wells up as a natural affection. It is a discipline that is worked out as a Gospel reality. And you and I need to embrace that. Look, it's easy to fall into love with natural affection. But just as easy to fall in, just as easy to fall out.

In marriage, one of the challenges, one of the tricks is we got to keep falling back in love each and every day. And God wants to aid and help us in that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the motivation of the cross. And you know what, in that day and in our day, we need to hear that because their culture and our culture celebrates self-love. Putting oneself ahead of others. And we're being called here to be something different than that.

In 2000, a book came out of a women's experience by the name of Rahna Rizzuto. She was a married mother of two. She received a scholarship to go and do some research in Japan. During that research in Japan, for six months away from her family, she kind of realized that she didn't want to be a mother anymore. She came home and told her husband that, that she'd kind of lost herself a bit, she wanted to get back in touch with herself. She didn't have the commitment anymore that she thought she had. In fact she wrote a book about her time in Japan and her rediscovery of herself. It was called, *Hiroshima in the Morning*.

It won a national book award, and she was interviewed on television several times. When she told her story, she was asked to explain her response by leaving her husband and her children. And she said, "You know what? Being a mother had made me realize that I didn't want to do that anymore. I wasn't willing to give up my life for someone else." And that's the challenge of Titus 2, verse 4. I want you to be a husband lover. I want you to be a children lover. And when you have exhausted natural affection, when life has challenged you, wrung you dry, when the relationship is dry when the times are hard, I'm going to command you. You can acquire a love.

There's an ocean of love in God and in Christ you can put the little bucket of your life into and fill it up again. And God will help you continue to be a husband lover and a child lover. Let's move on. Not only do we have her counsel, not only do we have her care, but I want you to see thirdly we have her chastity. Look what the Bible says here, "Teach these young women to love their husbands, love their children, to be discreet and chaste." Paul pairs husbands and children together, now he pairs discretion and chastity. I mean, to cut to the chase, we're dealing here with sexual purity.

Faithfulness within the covenant of marriage, physically and sexually speaking between husband and wife. What does 1 Thessalonians 4 say? Verses 3 through 8, it tells us this is the will of God for you, even your sanctification, abstain from sexual immorality. What does that mean? For a married woman that forbids adultery. For an unmarried woman that forbids fornication or sex before marriage. I mean, when you connect it to the preceding thought, she's to be a husband lover and she's to be chaste. Loving your husband undoubtedly, naturally excludes loving another man or another woman's husband.

You can't love them emotionally or sexually. You've got to be discreet and chaste. What does the word discreet mean? It means to act prudently, to react wisely. What does the word chaste mean? Originally it spoke about ritual cleanliness in relation to temple worship. But over time it bled into the more general idea of moral faithfulness and sexual cleanness. Of remaining faithful to God and your spouse, to possess your body in honor, to borrow another idea from 1 Thessalonians 4. To remind yourself your body is not for sexual immorality, your body is not your own, it was bought with a price. Your body's for God, to be used to the extension of his kingdom and for the fulfillment of his will.

What we've got to realize in the context here, here's what this verse is saying. To be discreet and to be chaste. Here's what I think Paul is saying to the young women on Crete. Act sensibly, act wisely, in an over-sexualized culture. Because you see, to be a Cretan, was to be morally and sexually lax. Right? I mean they had a reputation for that. Look at how the cultures described. Cretans are liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. That's Titus 1, verse 12. You'll notice in Chapter 3, verse 3, how they behaved before they became Christians.

Here's what we read, "We ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures." A lot of these young women came to marriage having had a string of sexual partners. Now they have to live up to the Christian ethic of sexual purity. They're to love their husbands with

purity and sexual fidelity. And that's a challenge. But the Holy Spirit can produce it, and the cross can motivate it, and the word of God can direct it. So what's the point? The young women of the churches on Crete, were to swim upstream in terms of their moral behavior.

They were not to succumb to the tyranny of their own unregenerate flesh or hearts. They were not to succumb to the surrounding wickedness. They were not to go back to the life Christ had called them out of. Now with the help of the indwelling spirit, informed by God's word, they're renewing their minds and they're no longer conforming to the world from which they came, and the world in which they live. That's true for them, and it's true for us. Are we not swimming upstream? I mean, to our young women, to our married women? I mean, do you get help out there to stay morally pure? Do the magazines help you? Do the images help you? Do the movies help you? No.

They want to corrupt and pollute. We live in a Cretan culture in California. And this is a real issue. The young wives and young women of our congregation need to heed this word, to be discreet and to be chaste. Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, she was single for many years, and so if you have got some of her books, some of them will say Nancy DeMoss, but now her books carry Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. She got married. I'm using a book of hers for my study of Titus 2. It's excellent. It's called, Adorned. I recommend it for every woman in the congregation, Adorned.

Here's what she says about this text, it's very helpful. "The assumption used to be that immorality was mostly a man's problem. However that notion is no longer valid if it ever was. Take for example the fact that one in six women regularly view some type of online pornography, and the vast majority of these women, sometimes like 80%... a much higher ratio than men... will eventually follow up their virtual activity with an actual face to face relationship." She says, "I read of one marriage counselor who said after 20 years of professional practice, that there was a time when 90% of the infidelity she encountered was initiated by men. But these days it's 50/50."

So this is a real issue. I mean, I speak on sexual purity a lot to our guys, but I'm glad I get an opportunity to speak to the women this morning, because it's real. How would you flesh that out? Well that's a sermon in itself. We've got sermons that deal with that, but I wrote out just a few things I'll bounce off as a kind of a way for you to flesh it out. You know, seek counsel. Titus 2, verse 4. Get an older woman in your life, or a series of women, that will just keep you accountable. Talk through these issues. Talk through where women are susceptible to sexual temptation.

Sometimes the door into that world is different from men, and you need a woman to help you think that through and put you on your guard. Don't forget to honor marriage. Think about the highness of the institution of marriage. It's being redefined in our culture. It's being maligned in our culture. But Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable among all men." That means it's a creation ordinance for every culture. "Marriage is honorable among all men, and the bed undefiled." The word undefiled is a liturgical worship word which tells us man even sex within marriage is an act of worship.

Marriage is a holy thing. It's a holy estate. And you need to put hedges around your marriage, and around your heart, and around your love for your husband so that your body is his and his alone, and his body is yours and yours alone. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. Understand that the home is such a pivotal thing in God's will, it's good for society, it strengthens the community of faith, it's a means of procreation and bringing up the next generation in a manner that glorifies God. We can't afford for marriages to collapse. We can't afford for divorce to be part of our dictionary.

Here's another way, set some boundaries. I don't have time to go to Proverbs 5 through 7, but in Proverbs 5, verse 8 and Proverbs 7, verse 25, a young man is warned about the seductress. But we can flip that, whether we're dealing with a young man or a young woman, the person in the wisdom literature is encouraged to avoid their way. Don't go by her house. Keep your distance. You've got to put some boundaries on how you speak to the opposite sex. Some boundaries on your internet involvement. You need to think that out, think that through. Set boundaries, build hedges, so you can protect your chastity, your fidelity, your purity.

Dress modestly. We talked about that just a couple of weeks ago. But it's interesting in Proverbs 7 in verse 10, it talks about the attire of a harlot, or a prostitute. There's a certain way a person can dress that's sexually alluring and enticing. A chaste, Godly, Christian, woman and wife will not dress like that. She'll dress modestly. She'll watch her necklines and hemlines, as we talked about a week or two ago, enough said. Develop intimacy. You know, sex is a gift from God. We're not embarrassed to talk about sex as Christians. In fact, in Proverbs 5, verses 15 to 20, the young man is encouraged by his father to drink water from his own well; that is, have a monogamous relationship with one woman, your wife, in the covenant of marriage.

Sexual love is set before us in metaphor of a well and water, clean and pure and satisfying. In fact it says in that verse, "Let her breasts satisfy you." Read the Song of Solomon if you need to spice things up. But here's the point, here's the point. This prohibition is real. Abstain from sexual immorality, but that is not abstain from sex within marriage. Enjoy it. 1 Corinthians 7, verses 1 to 5, says it needs to be regular and often. You want to be chaste, seek counsel honor marriage, set boundaries, dress modestly, develop intimacy with your husband, and anticipate disaster.

Realize what lies on the other side with some flirtation, because the heart runs ahead of the head. When you read Proverbs 5, verses 1 to 5, or Proverbs 6, verse 24, you've got the analogy there about adultery. Can a man take fire to his body and his clothes not be burned? Of course not. You can't put a live coal in your pocket and not be burned. You know what, don't think you can get involved in adultery and not be burned. There's physical consequences, there's emotional consequences, there's financial consequences. It'll destroy your home. You'll lose the respect of your children. You'll damage your witness for Christ if you're a Christian. It's horrendous.

Count the costs. Remember, you'll have to pay the piper. And then finally, pursue Christ, the pleasure of sin must be fought with the greater pleasure. Delighting in God, knowing his pleasure, his benediction on your life. Romans 13, verse 14, tells us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and don't make any provision for the flesh. And you know what, putting on Jesus, following him, loving him, treasuring him, that's the first step. It's easier not to make any provision for the flesh, because none but Christ can satisfy. And that's the truth.

You need to be, ladies, like the little ermine, which was an animal in the northern regions of the northern hemisphere. It was sought for its beautiful fur by European kings and judges. In the summer its coat was a rich chocolate brown except for the undersides of the body and legs. In the winter the color changes to a clear pure white broken only by a black tip on the tail. And this little animal, just instinctively seemed to know that it had this beautiful white fur, and it would do everything it could to avoid getting soiled or stained. And the hunters knew that.

And so the kings wanted their coats and the judges wanted their apparel, and so these little animals would be hunted. What they would do is, they would find out where the nest of the little ermine was,

and they'd fill it full of dirt and rubbish. And then they'd wait with their dogs as hunters. And they'd wait for it to come back towards its own nest or its lair, and then they would set the dogs. The little ermine would make an attempt to go inside for safety. But realizing of the dirt and the rubbish inside, it would turn, and it would face the dogs. In reality, it would rather die with a bloodstained fur coat than live with a dirty fur coat.

Interesting little story, you can Google it, the ermine. Oh that we had that kind of commitment to purity. To remain white for Christ. Let's move on. Her commitment, her commitment. Verse 5, you older women need to teach the younger women to be husband lovers, children lovers, discreet and chaste, homemakers... that's her commitment. She's committed to the home. Can I tie that to the previous thought, she's a husband lover? And she's chaste, and she's a homemaker. Every Christian woman is a homemaker, not a home-breaker. She'll never be involved in destroying another home. She's committed to her own, exclusively to her husband, out of love for God and him and her children.

It's interesting, the Greek is literally workers at home. That's not a really good translation. You might have a translation that says keepers at home, but it's a compound word in the Greek, worker and home. Workers at home, by implication, she puts her energy into the home. Now at this point, I realize in modern society, and even with some within the church sadly, I've just pulled the pin on a hand grenade. Homemakers? What are we talking, pastor? Your going to put women under house arrest? Are you going to chain them to the kitchen sink? You going to make them barefoot and pregnant? Are you taking us back to some element of kind of slavery and bondage? No, that's the furthest thought from my mind.

It has nothing to do with the text I'm reading. But people read this text and they kind of go, "Oh my, keepers at home means kept at home." So let me talk to you quickly and as briefly but substantially as I can about what it doesn't mean and what it does mean. It's one of these phrases or texts we've got to explain what it doesn't mean and then what it does mean. So let me go through these if you want to take notes. Number one, it doesn't mean that this is all a woman does. Okay? She is called to be a homemaker. One who does well at the affairs of her home.

She's like the Proverbs 31 woman who looks after the affairs of her home well. But it doesn't mean that's all she is. This is a core commitment. You know, we're more than our core commitments. We do more than our core commitments, but we never can do less than those. Whatever else we do, we must never desert that core commitment, and that's what we're saying here. It doesn't mean that, you know what, that's all she is... she's a homemaker. No, she's more than that. She must be more than that. She can be more than that. But she should never be less than that.

Number two, it doesn't mean that she can't work outside the home or from the home. Because in Proverbs 31, we've got this virtuous woman who's like the epitome of womanhood, Godliness, motherhood. And while she certainly looks after the affairs of her home well, in fact it says in verse 27, "She watches over the ways of her household." She's a homemaker. It talks about her cooking. It talks about her sewing. It talks about a lot of things she does. It talks about her decorating and the fine linen and tapestry that she uses. She's a home decorator, homemaker, she's good about the house.

But I want you to realize she's more than that. If you look at verse 16, we read she considers a field and buys it. From her profits she plants a vineyard. Verse 18 she perceives that her merchandise is good. This woman is doing things outside the home, alongside the home, in the commercial realm. She's buying real estate. She's developing agriculture. This is a multi-talented gifted vibrant woman, who's committed

to her home, and looking after the ways of her household, but that doesn't singularly define her. She works both outside the home and from the home.

Number three, it doesn't mean that she cannot delegate some of that domestic work to others, especially if she can afford it. It would seem by implication that this woman has maid servants, look at verse 15. She rises while it's yet night, provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants. Not everybody can enjoy that, but she seemed to have some home helps. Some maidservants, whatever you want to call them. And so while she's committed to the home, she's willing to delegate that, make it a little easier for her if that's what she's able to do. Just an interesting thought, that at least has got to be mixed into the bowl.

Number four, it doesn't mean she's house proud. I think in modern western culture, when we hear homemaker, we're thinking she polishes the silver and she cleans the crystal, and she makes the bed, and she irons the clothes, and she hangs the curtains, and that may well be part of it. But that's not what homemaker means essentially. If you go to 1 Timothy 5, verses 9 to 10, and verse 14. The older woman who can apply for help from the church. She's a widow of 60 years and up, she's got no children that can help her, and you know what, she has a testimony that her home was used for hospitality. The saints' feet were washed. The poor were served. The community was impacted.

So I just want us to make sure while it has an element of that, if you read Proverbs 31, her home sounds like it's beautiful and orderly and nice looking, but when you hear homemaker, we're talking about relationships. When a woman is called to be a homemaker, fundamentally she's called to be a husband lover and a child lover within her home, which will mean sometimes, especially with kids, that that home you dreamed of when you looked at Town and Country magazine, it doesn't exist. Your place looks like a battlefield, and somewhere where a bomb went off. I get it.

Here's another thing, my last point here, it doesn't mean that men cannot help around the home. Amen ladies? I help June all the time. I tell her where the dirt is, I give her the ... I'm kidding, I'm kidding. Once in a blue moon I'll vacuum, I'll clean the dishes, whatever. We negotiate how I can best help her. Fundamentally that's her job. She loves it, she's phenomenal at it. But it doesn't mean I can't help her. It doesn't mean I sit on my easy chair like I'm some king of the castle, ordering my wife about like she's some domestic servant. That's not what the text means.

Well then you say, "Pastor, what does it mean?" Okay, okay, hold on. Here's what it does mean. It means that homemaking is the core commitment of the woman. It's not all she is. It's not all she does. She can even work outside the home as long as it is not detrimental to the home. In fact, this woman it seems, when you talk about agriculture and fields and vineyards, it probably was around her home so she worked almost from the home more than she did outside of it. Your home, homemaking is your core commitment. It's not the man's core commitment.

Nowhere in the Bible is the man told to be a homemaker, a worker at home. In fact it's his job is to provide for his home. "Oh." You're saying, "Pastor that's stereotypes. Bread winners and all of that." No, it's Biblical. Sorry. You may have drunk the Kool-Aid, I haven't. No, this is her core commitment. Number two, it means that the woman finds joy in homemaking, and happily embraces that God-given instinct to nest and to nurture. I don't care what they tell us, women nest and women are natural nurturers. When I wanted sympathy, I didn't go to my dad. I went to my mum. She was the heart of the home. It wasn't that my father was heartless, but you understand. We've said that the man is the head of the home and the woman is the heart.

Not that a man is to be heartless. It just means God has given women, in their femaleness, a natural instinct to nest and to nurture, and a Godly woman embraces that. This is not a call to be I'm under house arrest, no, you're more than that. But this is a core commitment and you should embrace it. You should love to be a homemaker. To be about your home with your children around your feet and your husband coming home later in the day. That's a Biblical picture. And you should embrace that with joy. Listen to this verse. Verse 27, "She watches over the ways of her household, and she does not eat the bread of idleness." This woman is thinking about her household all the time. Not business, the house.

Not the boss at work, her husband. That's what occupies her mind. Oh she's more than a homemaker, but she can't be less than that, and this is the core commitment. I'll tell you another thing it means, it means that the husband is the primary provider. She's the primary homemaker and he's the primary bread winner. 1 Timothy 5, verse 8, "If a man doesn't take care of his house, he's worse than an infidel." And so I challenge every man and young man, it should be your job to get a job that allows your wife to stay at home and take care of the children. Don't force her to go to work. Don't put that pressure on her. That's on you.

This idea of dads staying at home while the wife goes to work, it's nowhere in the Bible. It's back to front, inside out. You say, "Pastor, that's tough." Well, tough. It does mean that a wife loves her children and her husband through managing the home well. I mean if you go to 1 Timothy 5, I think it's verse 13 somewhere around there, speaking of young women again it says, "They manage the house." They do that well. That's what it does mean, you manage your house well. Again, it's not all that you do. You can do things from the home and even outside the home, but never to a point where you're not in the home when you need to be in the home for your husband and your children.

That's just the plain meaning of the text. If you see something else, you're looking for something else. It does mean in the balance of things, the children will not be without their mother's day care. They won't be in a daycare. They'll be in their mother's daycare, because she's a homemaker. I'm talking about the balance of things, which it leaves some room for maneuver, allow some areas of balance and I realize there's seasons in life and all of that. But fundamentally, do you not think the Biblical picture is, that when children are born, that the mother's at home raising those children as a homemaker, as a mother, out of love for her husband and love for her children? That seems to be the picture of Proverbs 31.

And yet today something like 71% of women in the workforce are putting their children in daycare for extended periods of time. Psychologists tell us, let alone theologians, that's not good for the child. Common sense tells you that. By the way, one last thought, it does mean that young women ought to have and develop good domestic skills. That doesn't mean they need to be experts in crocheting or needlework. I'm not saying that. But whatever needs mended around the home, and on the motherly side of things, from clothes and other things, a woman's got to have a skill. The Proverbs 31 woman is up early and she's providing food. It means she can cook.

She doesn't need to be an expert cook or a chef, but she can cook. Okay. Without using a microwave, something like that. Okay? Just, you know, we're not doing that anymore. Again, I don't want to get exaggerated but mothers and women in our church ought to be teaching young girls how to handle the home and the basic functions that are there. They ought to have some domestic skills. If you read the Proverbs 31 woman, you know, you see skills that she exhibits in terms of tapestry and food and ordering the home, and taking care of all involved. So, that's the challenge. That's her commitment.

Let me just illustrate this and move on, because time beat me in the first service. Maybe I'll illustrate... sometime ladies and gentlemen, look into the marriage of Martin Luther and his wife Katie, great Protestant reformer. He turned the theological world upside down, and for pastors he turned the home upside down because the medieval church had highlighted kind of singleness and chastity in the part of men and women priests and nuns. And Martin Luther and the Protestant reformers said no, marriage for pastors and priests. Because that's what it says, doesn't it, in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1? In fact you want to be able to look at a pastor's home to see how he leads it, it'll tell you the kind of way he leads the church.

And so he turns the world upside down. And several of his friends get married. He's hounded by the Catholic church about it. There's an interesting part of his life where he gets a letter from nine nuns, who want to escape a nunnery, and they want to get married. So he sends this guy with a cart and a whole bunch of fish barrels and these nine nuns escape in the fish barrels. And they're brought to Wittenberg where he is, and over time he marries eight of them, but there's a ninth one. Katharina von Bora. She was feisty, and Martin, you know, started to realize and his friends started to realize, she had her eye on Martin but he wasn't biting the bait.

One of his reasons was, "Hey, I expect to be martyred. You don't want to marry me and get a martyr as a marriage gift, you know?" So he says, "No marriage is not for me." But over time, she wears him down, and his friends wear him down, and he gets married. And if you read part of his story, there's not a lot of romance in it to be honest, at the start. In fact, he tells you that. He said he married her more to bother and annoy the pope than he did out of love. That's true bill. Now he grows in love with her, which again is back to our earlier point, love can be acquired. And he does end up loving this woman deeply. One of the things about Katharina von Bora, or she became known to Martin as Myread or Katie. She was a brilliant homemaker.

I don't mean that again in this kind of domestic, you know, clean air environment. She ran a kind of old monastery. She had a little brewery going on the side for him and some patrons in the community. She had three boys, two girls and a dog. She had all kinds of stuff going on. And she handled it. Often she would put Martin in her place and he would often invite a bunch of seminarians and she'd be feeding for 10 and 15 and 20 people. I think she sought to exemplify this homemaker. It allowed him to pursue God's will. In fact he used to call her the Morning Star of Wittenberg, because she got up between four and five and started the day getting the food prepared, thinking through the chores, so that he could study and pray and do the work of the reformation.

In fact, here's what Martin Luther said about her, I love this statement. He said this, "In domestic affairs, I defer to Katie, otherwise I'm led by the Holy Spirit." That's a great statement. I mean he's saying I live under the Lordship of Jesus and I live in the power of the Holy Spirit, but when I'm at home, whatever Katie says goes. Whatever she does I buy into. She's the Morning Star of Wittenberg. In all things domestic, I depend on Katie.

Let's move on, we're not going to spend a lot of time on what I would call her competence, because the next thing after homemakers is good. Several translations translate this kind. There is a Greek word for kindness, it's not used here. I think this word good carries the idea of excellent here. A certain moral quality of excellence. And so we're being reminded here that this Godly woman, this young wife, is to be a woman who gives her best, and does what she does with excellence. I love Ecclesiastes 9, verse 10, the old King James which I grew up with, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might." But if you read Ecclesiastes 9:10, in the New Living Translation, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it well."

That's a good principle for anybody let alone a young wife or a young mother. Do it well. God deserves the best. So does your husband, so does your children. Don't be sloppy, don't be lazy, don't be incompetent. Become a good homemaker. Draw upon the power of the spirit and go to the cross so that you can be a husband lover and a child lover. And if you love all things excellent, you'll love purity, and sexual fidelity.

Let's go to the next thought. This is somewhat controversial too, her compliance. Her compliance. What else are we told? Well she's told next to be obedient to her own husband. Again, how out of sync is our culture with God's word? And how distinctly different is the church within the culture? So as we've worked our way through this list, we've now come to one, be obedient to your own husband. Or be submissive or subject, it's a Greek term that has a military flavor to it, believe it or not. It means to come under rank, which would seem to infer God has placed the husband as the head and his wife is to come under him, under the authority that God has given to him.

She's to recognize that authority and follow it. It's in the present tense verb. It means this is something she does all the time, not intermittently. You know, she obeys him on a Monday, takes a day off on Tuesday, and goes back to obeying him on a Wednesday. No, this is the disposition of her life. She wants to obey this man, follow him, trust him, serve him, because God has placed him over her because the head of the woman is man. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 3 or in Ephesians 5, that the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church.

But here's what's interesting, it's very important we get this, this is in the middle voice. And if you don't understand Greek, this is all you need to understand. When something's in the middle voice it means that the action being called for has to be done by the person themselves. They can't be forced to do it, others can't do it for them. And that's beautiful and it's very important that we understand this. This submission is a gift that the wife gives to her husband. He can't force it. He can't coerce it. Listen to me guys, you cannot force your wife to obey. You cannot coerce her into obedience. Hopefully as you lead her lovingly in a Christ like manner with a servant's heart, and you're married to a woman that loves God, and loves Jesus Christ, and lives life out submission to Jesus Christ, she will give you that submission.

She must. It's the middle voice. The wife is to give that to her husband. Now again, this is incendiary. I mean, to our culture this is archaic. To the modern feminists this sounds like slavery. It sounds like we're rolling the centuries back. Well again, for a few moments hang in, I'll go fast here. Let's talk about what it is not and what it is. Very important, because there's misunderstanding about submission as it's taught in the Bible. Let me say number one, what it's not. It is not a cultural mandate, because what secular egalitarians want to do, and even those in the evangelical church, they want to say look, Paul here's drawing from kind of the excepted norms in Roman society, their called household codes. And so this was expected of a wife then, and he's just reflecting that so that the word of God is not blasphemed.

That's only good so far, in fact it's not good at all, because in Titus 2, verse 1, which begins all of this teaching, what did we read? Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. This isn't a household code. This is Biblical doctrine. This is an echo of Genesis 2, verse 18. Where Eve was Adam's helper, to come alongside him and under him. This isn't a cultural mandate. This is a life that fits to and accords with sound doctrine.

Number two, it is not submission to men in general. Okay? This is not fostering some kind of Islamic culture. The Bible, in the Christian faith, doesn't encourage women to submit to men in everything. In

fact in this case, the woman is told to submit only to her own husband. Not other husbands, not other men. It's just important we say that. Number three, it's not a statement of inferiority. This is the biggest one. You get that all the time. So it means that the woman is kind of second class, inferior, less than? No. Because back in Genesis 2:18, God says to Adam of Eve, I'm going to make someone comparable to you. You're equal. Made in my image. I made them male and female.

But her role, her function, her assignment, is she's to help him. His priorities become her priorities. But we're not talking about inferiority. In fact I'll give you a verse I think answers that question. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 3, here's what we read, "The head of every man is Christ." Listen to that. Men submit to Christ. In their leadership they submit to his leadership. So ladies when you submit to your husband, don't think he can do anything he wants. He's to be submitted to Christ. There's a chain of command that comes downwards. As he submits to Christ and leads you in a manner fitting for a Christian leader with the heart like Christ, you submit to him.

Because here's what it says, "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is man." But notice this, on the head of Christ is God. What is that alluding to, I think that's alluding to the fact that Jesus as the son became obedient to the father, came and died on the cross for our sin. It's in Philippians 2:5-11, he had this mindset I'm willing to obey and even to the point of death on a cross. Father whatever you want, not my will but your will be done. Got a question, do we believe as evangelicals that Jesus was less than God? That he was less than the father? No we do not. So when we're talking about submitting, we're not talking about inferiority, we're talking about function, role, assignment.

And it's the woman's assignment in life to submit to her husband. Here's another thing it's not. It's not a justification for male dominance. Remember we said last week, Genesis 3, verse 16, one of the fall-outs of the fall was women would try and compete with their husbands and husbands would try and rule in a domineering fashion. This is not a card for a husband to dominate his wife in any kind of brutal fashion, unloving fashion. In fact that brings me to my next thought. It is not a call to silence or passivity, When a woman submits, it doesn't mean she becomes silent. It doesn't mean she becomes some kind of fifth wheel. It doesn't mean she becomes some kind of wallflower or doormat.

She will submit to her husband, but a wise leader will listen to his wife, because she's made in the image of God. She's indwelt with the Holy Spirit, she studies the word of God, she's got insights in life and wisdom that will make him better than he is and more than he can be by himself. And so don't read submission to be silence or obedience to mean you've got no opinion. And I want to say to guys, if you're running your home like you know what, sit down and listen, you're not fulfilling the Bible. You lead your home but you listen, and you love. Sometimes your wife has got an insight or perspective that's good and you should listen to that.

I think it was Spurgeon who kind of joked and said, "You know what, the man is the head of the woman." And he said, "Ladies don't try and be the head of your husband, but you can be his neck. And the neck gets to turn the head." That's good. My wife has turned me several times, and I'm thankful for it because I missed something. I didn't think, and even on an emotional level, didn't think that through. So it's not a call to silence or passivity. Very important too, it's not a call to accept abuse. I want to tell you on behalf of the word of God, and on behalf of our elders, that if you're being abused physically, call the police on your husband.

Or call the elders and we'll get involved. No man has a right to abuse any woman, in the name of you be submissive. It can't be physical or demonstrable psychological abuse. That's unacceptable, This verse

does not embrace that or condone that. What is it? It's kind of already said it in many ways, but it's a willingness to accept the God-given, heaven designed function. You accept the created order. It's a call to prioritize your husband's priorities. I mean you've got passions and you'll find outlets for your creativity and giftedness. The Proverbs 31 woman does that. But if you're your husband's helper, it's your job to make his priorities your priorities. That's what it means.

To become a help, not a hindrance. It means you'll do this in a spirit of obedience with an attitude of respect. Obey your husband. Now let me say this, that doesn't mean you obey him if he asks you to sin. To watch a pornographic movie, to do something that you know goes against your conscience or the word of God. You do not have to obey or submit in that case, anymore than as a Christian when I'm called to obey the government, if the government asked me to disobey God, I say what the apostles said, "I'd rather obey God than man." And a wife can say, "I'd rather obey God than my husband."

So when we say obey, when we say follow your husband's leadership, that is not leadership into sin or anything that violates your conscience. But in the best of circumstances, if he leads you lovingly and Biblically, you're going to obey that, You're going to give him the gift of submission in honor to him and in obedience to God, and you're going to do it with respect. 1 Peter 3, verses 5-6, talks about how that old woman Sarah in the Bible called her husband lord. Again, that's a verse that's kind of been misused. It's not like, you know, when I come downstairs in the morning June stands to attention. "Yes sir, three bags full sir." That's not what the verse means.

It means respect. It's not a capital L, it's sir, it's a term of respect. It just means that your wife's not going to be sassy. While she's got her own opinions, she knows when to share them, how to share them, and when her husband doesn't agree, she's willing to let him lead. That's what it means. Show some respect. And do remember that your act of submission is an aspect of submission that all are involved in. While God calls you to submit to your husband, God calls the husband to submit to Christ. God calls husbands and wives to submit to the government. God calls the church to submit to its elders. So don't be getting this idea, "Oh, we're called to submit. God's kind of picking on us."

So there you are. That's her compliance. It's radical. It's counter-cultural. It's controversial, but it's biblical. A few people were surprised in 2011 when Kate Middleton, who married Prince William, she chose not to use the word obey in her marriage vows, and obey was part of the old traditional Anglican vows. Makes me wonder if she'll ever obey him when he's king. But she wouldn't obey. That's where our culture is at. No, obey? Submit? But this is the word of God. Don't ever forget ladies, you live in a fallen world, ruled by a fallen creature, who's a rebellious angel called Satan, who wants to help other people rebel against God's created order.

And he does that in the lives of wives who won't be husband lovers, children lovers, sexually pure, homemakers, submitted to their husbands. Okay, as the guys come up, time's gone, but I'll just throw you in the direction of the last thought, would have been her concern... what ought to be her concern... that the word of the Lord may not be blasphemed. I want you to notice there the word that or so that, that's a purpose clause. So here's what Paul's saying. Hey, you older women grab some of those younger women, younger wives, teach them to be husband lovers, children lovers, teach them to be teachable, teach them to be sexually pure and faithful, teach them to be excellent and capable, teach them the importance of the home as a base of operations, teach them to submit to their husbands, so that the word of God's not blasphemed.

So that God's created order, takes place in the midst of the disorder that is the world in rebellion against God. It's basically saying that our marriages can reflect the Gospel. It's basically saying that our homes can become an outpost for the kingdom of God. Ladies, men, our lives, our marriages, our homes within our communities ought to reflect, and not deflect, the Gospel. When I was a teenager, I had a milk round, you know, we all did our time didn't we? Milk rounds, paper rounds, whatever. I mean this is going back a bit. We're back in the time when doctors visited you at your house, and you got milk bottles left at your door. And I would deliver those with a friend of mine, Steven Doyle, and every so often we'd go with his brother who owned the business and we'd collect, you know, the milk money.

One night we're standing outside this woman's home, and Steven's brother's getting the money, and we're kind of horsing around behind him to a point where we were pretty rude and rambunctious. So he gets his milk money, the lady closes the door, you could tell she was a little upset with all that was going on. He kind of apologized, and then as soon as the door closed he gut punched me. I mean, I'm telling you, really hard. I doubled over, almost went down. He slapped his brother in the head, and then he said this, I've never forgot it by the way, because it came with a punch. "Don't you guys ever embarrass me in front of my customers again."

It's a good lesson. I think Titus 2, verses 4 and 5, right there at the end, that's what it's saying, hey to the church, don't embarrass me in front of the world. Women are abandoning their husbands and their children. Some of them are murdering them in their womb. They're having sexual liaisons before marriage and outside of marriage. They're pursuing careers to the detriment of their homes. And leadership in the home's a jump shot. But don't you be that, ladies, says Christ. Don't embarrass me in front of the world. Live out the word of God. Genesis 2:18 is explained further in Titus 2:4-5.

Father, we thank you for this word. May we hide it in our hearts so we may not sin against you. May we continue to build homes that reflect the Gospel, that display the glory of God, the love of Christ for his church. Help us indeed not to be conformed to this world, but to be renewed in our mind. Help our ladies to love out the full expression of their womanhood creativity. We realize that that can be expressed beyond the home, beyond motherhood, but we also realize that at the heart of God's call upon a woman's life, apart from a call to singleness, is to marry and become a husband lover, and a child lover, and a homemaker.

To love that man sexually and practically and faithfully across a lifetime. To submit to Jesus Christ, and to submit to her husband, so that the Gospel may be served, so that the world might be impressed. That it all doesn't have to end in a divorce, that children can be brought up to be obedient, and those who are an honor and not a dishonor to their parents. We can find sexual fulfillment in one partner across a lifetime. Lord, help us to do all of this, and help us to realize that it's spiritual, it's theological, and it's evangelistic for Jesus sake. Amen.