

Loyalty and Submission (Part 2)

Submission Teaches Leadership

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We are going to begin this sermon by turning to Matthew 24: 45. My Bible has a little caption over the paragraph which says "The Unfaithful Servant." Recall that my last sermon in this series had to do with faithfulness, or loyalty.

Matthew 24:45-51 Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat [or food] in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In my last sermon we began to explore the importance of loyalty, translated in the Bible as "faithful" or "faithfulness." In this context we can see that there is promise of huge rewards for loyalty from God Himself, and also terrible disqualification and pain for those who are disloyal to the assignments that God gives to us. For that reason alone the issue of loyalty should not be passed off lightly.

In these sermons we are looking at the process of how loyalty produces what it produces. When we begin to see what it produces, I think we can begin to understand why God puts a great deal of stress on faithfulness.

To me, the most important principle developed in my last message is the understanding that there is a direct connection between loyalty and subjection. A major purpose for God's demand that we be in subjection to Him is that subjection to Him is what prepares us for life and leadership in the Kingdom of God.

We have a tendency to think of subjection in negative terms, but let us begin this sermon by making it clear that subjection to God does not enslave. It frees, and it works to produce success in life in whatever endeavor in which one is involved, whether it be marriage, work, athletics, or whatever. The outstanding example of this is Jesus Himself. In John 8: 29 He stated that He always did what pleased the Father. He was loyal to what God said for Him to do. He was a faithful man.

Was Jesus successful in life? Of course He was. In the verses immediately following what He said in John 8:29, He added to that one of the most famous of all the principles He taught.

John 8:31-32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Being free is not enslavement. Subjection to God does not produce enslavement. It produces freedom. The close linkage between those two utterances in John 8:29 and in John 8:32 is inescapable. Loyal subjection to God's truth is what produces success in life and freedom.

When one gets the whole picture, it even includes freedom from death, because in John 11:25-26 Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." And then He asked the question: "Believe you this?"

The example of Adam and Eve stands in stark contrast to what Jesus taught. They chose to subject themselves to Satan rather than to God, and what they produced was death.

We are going to look at three illustrations to see how this principle of being loyal and subject to what is right and good works.

Suppose in the early days of your formal education in elementary school the teacher gave you the truth that in mathematics "two plus two equals four." First, we have an authoritative figure in the teacher. That teacher is a person of vast experience compared to you, and she is giving the truth to use in order for one to be successful in mathematics. But for whatever reason, you just could not get it. Either you were rebellious, or you did not see from the way she was teaching it, and so you did not trust her. You refused to accept it and use it.

How successful were you going to be whenever you would have to use that simple truth that "two plus two equals four?" It is not going to work, is it? You will get a wrong answer every time. That is the principle we are dealing with, except we are dealing with God. That is the difference. One other difference is that it is a lot more important in dealing with Him than it is with the teacher.

I am going to give another somewhat more complex example. It is from the world of athletics. John Wooden was coach of the most successful university basketball team ever in the United States of America. He coached UCLA from 1949 through 1975. During that period of time his team won an incredible 82% of their games. No coach in any other sport over that long of a period of time ever did better. He stands head and shoulder above every other coach who ever existed.

Overall, during that period UCLA won ten national championships, and in one stretch won seven of them in a row. Also during that stretch, at one time they won 88 games in a row. During John Wooden's tenure from 1949 through 1975, UCLA lost only two games on their home court. Nobody has ever equaled that in the world of any coaching.

John Wooden's approach to the game was that every player had to sacrifice his individuality for the sake of the team only. In addition, he had developed a program of character development containing qualities that he called "The Pyramid of Success." I have seen a drawing of that

pyramid. It is very interesting. It consists of 25 triangular-shaped blocks, each with a character quality listed within that he wanted his players to work on developing. Most of those qualities appeared to have no direct association with winning basketball games at all. They were virtues like faith, patience, integrity, reliability, honesty, friendship, self-control, loyalty, and sincerity.

Coach Wooden said that his Pyramid of Success program was designed to produce peace of mind in the players through the satisfaction within the player. If the player would use them, the player would always know that he had done his best—whether or not the team won the game.

He required a very disciplined approach to every aspect of basketball. He had analyzed virtually every circumstance that could take place on the court, and his practice method was to drill his players until they could do virtually everything in their sleep. In one sense, this is no different from what many other coaches do. The difference was that when he recruited players, he was very good at discerning the players who would subject themselves to him. He was able to sell himself to them, and they subjected themselves to his way, and they became more successful than any string of university-level basketball teams before him, or since.

The secret of their success was not just that they were talented players. It was that they willingly subjected themselves to Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success methods, purposes, and "team above self" discipline. As we would say today, they "bought" into his way. They were willing to make whatever sacrifices were necessary to please him. You can begin to tell they had tremendous respect for him. It was their subjection that produced cooperation and leadership in the basketball world that nobody before or since has even come close to matching. It is interesting that when Coach Wooden retired in 1975, the program immediately began a long decline to the level of everyone else.

I am going to give now one final simple illustration. Have you ever bought an item that came in a box containing about fifty parts, and you had to successfully assemble all those parts before you could use whatever it was that you bought? I have done that pretty often. I found that if I subjected myself to the assembly instructions sent by the manufacturer, the assembly would always work out correctly.

Sometimes I found those instructions difficult to follow because I had my own perception of how to do things. That is the principle we are learning in our relationship with God. He knows how to do everything exactly right, and if we can just allow Him to sell Himself to us, and if we can follow what He says, it will work out. Life will be good because we are following the instructions.

To this point what I have illustrated is a simple principle. Success and leadership result from following the rules, as long as those rules are right for the process involved.

In that first message we saw that there has been a deliberate concerted effort to destroy the institution of marriage in the United States of America through organizations like the National Organization of Women and Planned Parenthood. Those organizations, and others like them, have successfully instilled attitudes and perceptions in peoples' minds which, if followed, guarantee that a marriage will not work. Unfortunately, very many brides and grooms go into marriage with the wrong concepts in their minds.

If we are going to have not only successful marriages, but also be successful in God's entire

purpose for us, we must begin by examining ourselves to discover whether we might be using these foul concepts that were taught by these organizations, repent of them, and begin using God's way.

We began to see in that sermon that success in marriage hinges on whether we will subject ourselves to Him. Adam and Eve failed to follow through on His instructions. They got themselves kicked out of the Garden, and they died. This is a simply-told story, but the issue is that God is showing us a very clear pattern through them, and it only takes a couple of paragraphs to explain. It is that simple. They rejected God's instruction, and they lost the battle immediately.

Let us watch a second principle unfold. Let us go back to Jesus again and see the declarations that He made as the most successful servant in God's whole operation. He said, "I always do what pleases My Father." He was resurrected, and to this very day He lives in the top leadership position that exists under the Father.

Is it not our destiny to join Him in the Kingdom of God as kings and priests under Him? Are we not, as God's children, to follow in His footsteps? You know the answer to that. If we follow in His footsteps, does that not mean that we are to do exactly as He did?

When I was a kid we used to play a game called "Follow the Leader." Whatever the leader did, everybody who was following the leader had to do the same thing. If he ran, you ran. If he jumped over a fence, you jumped over the fence. If he climbed up a tree, you climbed up a tree, and on and on it goes. We are dealing with a principle which is that simple. We are to follow the leader.

I Corinthians 11:1 Be you followers [imitators] of me, even as I also am of Christ.

The conclusion is inescapable. In God's order of things leadership is produced through subjection to His instructions, because that is exactly what Christ did. It produced leadership in Christ's life and, if we follow and imitate Him, then we are going to produce leadership as well.

There is a caveat here. I am not saying that following Christ is easy. The thing that He did is literally impossible for us to do now. We have already ruined it. Even following Him perfectly after we are converted is nonetheless very difficult, but we are expected to strive to do it.

I Peter 3:13 And who is he that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good? [Here comes the caveat.] But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

Christ always did things righteously, and if we are imitating Him we will do things righteously. He is warning us here that just because we do things righteously, it does not mean that we are not going to suffer. Did Jesus suffer even though He did righteously? Of course. We should not go into this blind, but we should go into this understanding that doing the right thing is not

always going to be easy, and even pain and suffering may follow. The situation may be very difficult.

I Peter 3:14 But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy [blessed] are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

I Peter 3:17 For it is better if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing than for evil doing.

Here is the challenge to us: Do we believe strongly enough to confront whatever difficulty arises with submission to do what He says to do in His word? Here is a major key though to modify this somewhat and help it to be more acceptable. Nobody is really behind the eight ball anymore than others, because everybody is required to learn and grow in the same principles of subjection. It matters not whether you are male or female, pastor or lay member, husband or wife, employer or employee, governmental official or the subject citizen.

As I stated in that previous message, the only difference is the focus that the person finds himself in, and the focus is the situation in which the subjection is called for by God. How is this so? If we believe what the Bible says, it clearly establishes that all authority flows from the Father through Christ. In I Corinthians 11: 2-3 we will see there a well-established ladder of authority.

I Corinthians 11:2-3 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

If He instructs us to subject ourselves, the reality is in both theory and practice that our subjection is to God because He instructs it, and our faith is in Him. This is the second big principle. Our subjection is given regardless of who the person is who has authority over us in whatever the situation may be. We give our subjection because God instructs it. Keep that in mind. Our faith is in Him because He is the One who says this is what we are to do.

The circumstance might from time to time be most uncomfortable. Christ showed, through His example, He subjected Himself to the Father right to the death. That was not a happy situation. It was frightening, and it was painful to the extent He asked that it be removed from Him. In one sense you might say He really did not want to do it. You see, He set His will and He subjected Himself because the Father was telling Him.

He took His orders from the Father, and He always did what pleased the Father and not what pleased Him. That is so important. Did it work out right? Yes it did, even though it was difficult to go through. He was resurrected, and look at what He has now! We have to project that same attitude into our lives and realize that when we get into tight situations in which subjection is not happy for us to face, we do it anyway because God instructed it; not the authority that is in front of us, threatening us, but God.

I Peter 3:7 Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them [the wife] according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

We are going to tear this verse apart by looking more closely at three words. Men, I want you to take special notice, because this is addressed to us in our relationship with our wife.

The last word in that verse is "hindered." This word "hindered" is more literally synonymous with "impeded" or "cut off." Either one could be used depending upon the context in which it would appear. Peter is giving expression how seriously important it is for a husband to be in alignment with God's instructions regarding his attitude toward, and treatment of, his wife. We are talking about marital relationships here, and as the head of the house, this is instruction to you.

Let me make it very plain to you men how important this is. If a man is not subjected to God's will by living with his wife according to understanding, it does not matter how long or how beautifully worded his prayers are, they are not going to go any farther than the ceiling. Did you hear me?

A man may be somewhat ignorant of his responsibility, so that gives him some measure of excuse. But if he is not ignorant, then the man is a hypocrite if he demands subjection of his wife but does not give God the subjection that is required of him. See, this is subjection to God. In such a case then the man is simply puffed up with vanity, but probably feeling good about himself in the delusion because he is the boss.

The first word in that verse is "likewise." God is comparing the instruction in verse 7 with the instruction He had previously given the ladies. God's expectation of men is that they are to work at making their marriage successful just as diligently and devotedly as God expects the wife to do. The men are to do likewise, in equal manner. Every man knows that his wife is supposed to be subject to him. Every man had better know that he is supposed to be equally subject to God as he demands his wife to be subject to him.

God thus qualifies those men who neglect their responsibility to Him by being a good husband as a sinner. John 9:31 says, "God hears not sinners." If a man is neglecting his wife by not being subject to God in what God says to do within the family situation, he is a sinner, and just like Peter said, his prayers are going no farther than the ceiling. Do you men realize the seriousness of this? It means that while the circumstance exists, his prayers are cut off. His relationship with God is cut off. It is that serious. We are leading to something here.

Let me make this even plainer and clearer. Men, the quality of your relationship with God, and your leadership, is being determined by what was just said in I Peter 3:7. The quality of your action toward God does not hinge on whether you married a good wife or bad, a warm or a cold lover, a gourmet cook or a TV-dinner cook, a careless or a good housekeeper, or an affectionate or an indifferent mother. It depends whether you (not her) are conducting your life in subjection to God.

I will make it even plainer. Men, everything hinges on your relationship with God. Admittedly, your wife can make it easier, but I am trying to get you to see now that you cannot use your wife as an excuse. God makes something very clear in Ezekiel 18.

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it [or he] shall die.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sins, it shall die.

Verses 4 and 20 encapsulate the substance of that whole chapter. God is saying that everybody is responsible ultimately for his or her own conduct. We cannot blame it on others. It is so very easy to pass the blame onto our parents saying that they were not good parents. But God is saying, "Grow up!" There comes a time when we are adults and we have to realize that we are responsible for changing. If we did not have a good upbringing, we are to change. God gives us ample instruction and ample opportunity to change.

Now men, feed that right back into the marriage. You cannot blame it on your wife. Regardless of how good the wife is, you have to try with all of your heart, with all of your being, to do what Christ would have done in a similar situation. What did He do? He laid down His life for His wife-to-be, day by day, and inch by inch. He said, "Greater love has no man that he gives his life for his friend." That is what Christ did, and men, you have no closer friend than that one with whom you are one.

How important is it? It is my considered opinion, from the things that I see in this Book, that the great bulk of our judgment by God is going to be on the basis of how we get along as husband and wife. If we cannot get along with our wife who is somebody we are supposed to love, somebody we chose to be one with, how good are we going to be for His Kingdom? Always remember that it is not the judgment of your wife you have to pass. It is God's judgment. He is the Judge, and He sets high standards for husbands. There is a lot riding on your relationship with your spouse.

In God's instruction in I Peter 3:7, a man's attitude and conduct toward his wife is aptly described by God as setting a very high standard. That standard appears in the words "giving honor."

I Peter 3:7 Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel.

I Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

We are going to look at two words here. The word "precious" in I Peter 1:19, and the word "honor" in I Peter 3:7. These two words are not quite the same; however, they are cognate, which means there is a relationship between them. In this particular relationship, the one is derived from the other. In other words, one of these two words is the root word from which the second one is derived.

In I Peter 1:19 is the root word, and it is translated "precious." This word, transliterated from the Greek, is spelled exactly the same as our word "time." However, it is pronounced *tee-may*. The word that is derived from that is the one in I Peter 3:7 is translated "honor," and it is transliterated "timios," pronounced *tim-ee-os*, and derived from the root "time" (*tee-may*), translated "honor."

In both cases the words mean almost the same thing. The best way to put it is that they indicate something of great worth. It can be honor, precious, esteem, valuable, treasure. Any one of those words would fit that situation.

How do you value Christ's blood? It is pretty precious, is it not? It opens up the way to God's grace. It opens up the way to access to God. It provides us with forgiveness not only at the beginning of our conversion, but all the way through whenever we sin out of weakness. We are forgiven on the basis of Christ's precious blood. Are you beginning to get the point?

Men, what would you do to protect the precious blood of Christ? In I Peter 3:7 Christ is commanding us men to have the same attitude toward our wife. We are to give her honor, because in our eyes she is precious. She is more precious, more valuable, and worth more than any other being on earth.

What would you do, men, to protect and to take care of, to polish, to shine up, and hide in a time of emergency that which is most precious to you? Do you see the attitude here? I said to you earlier God is setting a standard that seems almost unreachable, but it is the standard His own Son set for the church, and it is why He died for the church. It was in order to protect a relationship that has begun, and a relationship that is going to last for all eternity. Pretty valuable.

Has Christ's attitude changed toward us at all now that He is God? He is at the right hand of the Father. Malachi 3:16 tells me something. This is written in the Hebrew, but it has the same sense to it.

Malachi 3:16-17 Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: [Who is it that fears the Lord? It is the church.] and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought [meditated] upon his name. And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him.

To God, we are precious jewels, and when we are going to be attacked He will put us in a place where we will be safe from the worst of the onslaught. We are still a precious treasure to Him and, men, this is God's instruction to us. It is nothing to sneeze at. It is a weighty responsibility.

We are not done yet with I Peter 3. Verse 7 says "as unto the weaker vessel." We are going to look at the word "weaker" and see how it impacts on a man's responsibility. This is a term that in the Greek indicates a lacking in physical strength or stamina. It has nothing to do with intellect, character, moral courage, or emotional or spiritual strength. God is saying right here that a woman, compared to a man, is physically weaker.

Men, the woman may be more intelligent than you. She may have more moral courage than you do. She may actually, despite her emotions, be more emotionally stable than you, even though she may be apt to cry where you would not cry. She may have more spiritual strength than you, but, nonetheless, God says that physically she is weaker than you.

I am going to suggest something to you that I think is one of the pictures Peter may have had when he wrote this verse.

I Peter 2:5 You [meaning the whole congregation, Christians] also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

This is a spiritual responsibility. Judging by the fact that this thought appears in I Peter 2: 5 shortly before the verse we are tearing apart in I Peter 3: 7, I think Peter may have had this very thing in I Peter 2: 5 in mind when he got to writing about the attitude a man should have toward his wife when he called her "a weaker vessel." The Temple may have been on his mind, and we all, male and female, are symbolically parts of that Temple.

In Acts 9: 15 God is talking to Ananias about Paul. Ananias is the man who baptized Paul. He was a little bit hesitant about going to meet Paul. He thought he might lose his head or something, so God reassures him.

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

The word "vessel" here is exactly the same word Peter used in I Peter 3, translated "vessel." In this context, vessel is clearly used to indicate a person chosen for the service of God. With that picture in mind, a man, because of his clear superiority and physical strength, can easily be pictured as a brick or a girder in the building (the Temple). However, a woman must be considered as part of the more delicate equipment used in the service there. This is why I think he used the term "vessel."

If you can get the picture, you might even kick a brick around a bit, but you would not do that to a less sturdy piece of equipment. Think of something delicate that might be in the sanctuary in that building. You would not do that kind of thing to something delicate.

It is interesting that the word used in the Greek in I Peter 3: 7 translated "vessel" in secular Greek writings, that same word is sometimes translated into the English words "equipment," "implement," and, believe it or not, even "stuff."

Before we leave this verse, let us not forget the point here. All of these are commands from God. The instruction to a man is that he is not to govern his attitudes and actions toward his wife on the basis of the way she treats him, but on the basis of the way God instructs him. It is God to whom we are to subject ourselves.

We are now going to take a look at some of the ladies' responsibilities.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit [subject] yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.

The key word here is the word "fit." It is Strong's # 433. It literally means "to have arrived at." It literally means "reached to" or "pertains to." The key here is the word "literally." However, when it is used in an ethical context, as it is in Colossians 3:18, it means "that which is due another." It can also mean "It is your duty," or "It is what is fitting in a given circumstance." In other words, it is indicating a standard that one is obliged to perform.

Now we are going to look at the same word in a similar situation, in a similar context, and the meaning is going to be expanded upon. When I say "in a similar context," I do not mean exactly, but just similar.

Ephesians 5:1 Be you therefore followers of God as dear children.

A little bit earlier we were talking about being followers of Christ, and now here is instruction not just for men, but for all of us. We are all to be followers of Christ as dear children. This instruction is for all of us.

Ephesians 5:2-5 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this you know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

The first thing I want you to notice is how many Christian standards are alluded to in those five verses. When it says something like "no whoremonger, no unclean person, no covetous man, no fornicator, no filthiness," all of those things are the opposite of what the standard is. He is alluding to standards that one is to live up to.

In those five verses where does the word "fit" or "fitting" occur? It does not, but in the Greek it does— only in this case it was translated "convenient." In verse 4 it says "which are not convenient," or "not fitting." Is it fitting ever for a Christian to commit fornication, filthiness, being a whoremonger, being covetousness? It is never fitting. Those are the other extremes away from the standard. That is why I said "alluded" to. He shows the opposite extreme, and says none of them are fitting.

According to my *Webster's Dictionary*, the word "convenient" means "suitable," "proper," or "suited to a particular situation." Thus the vices listed here by Paul in this context are not proper. They are improper. We see this understanding in Colossians 3:18 that a wife's

subjection to her husband is proper because it is right, fitting, or convenient because of her faith and relationship with God.

Let us make it real clear here. Subjection to your husband is the right thing to do because God said it is. Ladies, I want you to be assured that this subjection that God requires of you implies absolutely no inferiority, despite what the feminists say. The feminists say that because what they say is motivated by their carnal heart, and Romans 8: 7 is clear proof and correct when it says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Ladies, do you realize that what we just went through in Colossians 3: 18 is a law of God? It is every bit a law of God as "You shall not kill," "You shall not lie," and "You shall not steal." "You shall be subject to your husband." God's judgment of you, like God's judgment of the man, is going to hinge greatly on how well you carry out your responsibility within the marriage, because you are dealing with subjection every day of your life. Remember that subjection to God leads to and produces leadership in the Kingdom of God. Do you want the leadership of being a king and priest? We have to prove to God that we love Him, and we do it by being in subjection to Him.

We are going to go to another scripture in Galatians 3, because I am still trying to reassure you ladies that this implies absolutely no inferiority on your part. When Paul wrote Galatians 3: 26, he meant the whole congregation; so this goes for everybody.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you all are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

In this context the word "one" implies equality. One of the things Paul is saying here is that God does not play favorites. There is no respect of persons with God. He does not play favorites even with His children. It does not matter to Him whether one is an Israelite or a Gentile, whether one is male or female, or whether one is young or old. All are equal in His sight in terms of judgment.

God assigns responsibilities in His Word. It matters not whether one's assignment or responsibility occurs in relation to civil government, employment, the church, or marriage. When we subject ourselves to God's instruction, what will follow are the blessings of order, peace, and accomplishment. They will be produced because each person is functioning in his or her assigned role as God designed things, just like a perfectly functioning machine or a team. We could reflect back on Coach Wooden. He demanded that every player be subject to the whole. Every part of that team was equal in Coach Wooden's eyes.

Remember I said that when we subject ourselves to God's instruction, what follows are the blessings of order, peace, and accomplishment. They will be produced because each person is

functioning within his or her assigned role, as God designed things. In my Bible, James 3:17 has the caption "True and False Wisdom." Wisdom is the major subject, and wisdom, in one sense, can be defined as "doing what is right."

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

What we have here is a major general benefit stated. Again I want you to notice that it is not gender-specific. This is not just something for men. It is for men and women.

Now what is righteousness? Let us give a simple definition. Righteousness is simply doing right. It is right doing. It is truth. Truth is righteousness.

Let us change it a little bit. Righteousness is what God assigns us to do. Let us change it a little bit more. Psalm 119:172 says, "All His commandments are righteousness." So when God says "You shall not kill," that is righteous. If He says, "Husbands, love your wives," or "Wives, subject yourself to your husband," that is a command of God. It is a law of God. It is right to do such a thing.

A second key word in verse 18 is the word "peace." When we feed this into the overall subject, which is wisdom (right doing, doing right), righteousness is wisdom. What does it produce? God actually tells us what it produces. Believe it or not, it produces the same thing Coach Wooden said about his Pyramid of Success. It produces satisfaction. In other words, it produces contentment. It produces peace. The fruit of righteousness is peace. Do you want peace in your family? You can accomplish things when there is peace in the family. It is one of the major keys to success. That is why God said it is wisdom. Doing right is wisdom, and it is going to produce peace.

Do you know why God is so concerned about peace? If you are at war with your spouse, that is hardly peace. Correct? It is war. Now, when you are at war, what pray tell are you thinking about? You are thinking about (1) either how to defend yourself, or (2) how to attack the other person. Do you see something wrong in the fruit here? Warfare makes us self-centered. It hardly gives us a chance to think about anything but self-satisfaction.

We cannot please God by pleasing ourselves. We please God like Christ did by always doing what He says to do. What does that give us? It gives us the very thing we are looking for. It gives us peace. It also shows God that we are not self-centered, but God-centered. He will respond to that so far as, He says, to give you your heart's desire—and He can do it.

When we do what He says to do, He is glorified. "Oh! Look at My kids!" "All right! Go to it!" "I am proud of you." Is that not what He said about Jesus? He said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Why was He pleased with Him? He was pleased with Christ because Christ always did what the Father wanted Him to do. He completely subjected Himself to the Father. There is your goal, and there is no better place to practice it than in your marriage. You will never find any circumstance that will be the equal of it anywhere, and I feel that it, above

all other things, prepares us for the Kingdom of God.

Now, if God is willing, I will continue this, men, and rake you over the coals once more. And ladies, we will hopefully lead you to love that guy and be completely subjected to him because of God.