

The Evangelistic Power of Feminine Beauty Part 2

sermonaudio.com

Our Identity in Christ

By Ty Blackburn

Bible Text: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Preached on: Sunday, August 13, 2023

Providence Church

2146 Buford Hwy

Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

I invite you to turn within your Bibles to 1 Peter 2, I mean chapter 3, 1 Peter 3. We'll be looking again at verses 1 to 6. The title of the message is the same as it was last Sunday, "The Evangelistic Power of Feminine Beauty." The evangelistic power of feminine beauty. Talk about feminine beauty, what an amazingly urgent subject that our world needs to understand when the whole issue of gender is in such confusion today, and when we speak the truth as Boone shared before he led us in prayer, I mean, reading the Scripture in prayer, it's misinterpreted. People see it as hate speech for us to say what God has said, that as Jesus said, from the beginning, "Do you not know that from the beginning He made them male and female?" It's two genders, two sexes, and your gender is not assigned by a doctor, it's not assigned by culture, it's revealed by God. He creates you male, he creates you female, and he has a beautiful purpose in that. God is the one who made the world by his great power and he knows how he wants us to live. He knows how we thrive. He knows how we find blessing and joy and fulfillment. And what we see is that we find our true fulfillment and meaning when we live in submission to God. We were created not to be free agents, to go our own way. True, you were born with a disposition to do that. I was as well. You know, we are conceived in iniquity, brought forth in sin, our hearts that go astray from the womb but we are meant to live in submission to God. That's where we find our true joy. That's where we find our true meaning. And so living our lives and patterning our thinking and our living after the Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit, once you come to know Jesus and you have a new heart through the gospel, then our call is to be transformed, not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our minds are renewed to think God's thoughts after him and we have more and more joy and we do what this passage is calling us to do, we demonstrate in our lives as we submit to God the beauty of a life lived before the Lord. The desirability of it, the true humanity, man becomes everything he's meant to be, woman becomes everything she's meant to be as we live submitted to God and that's what Peter is getting at in this section.

We come to a passage that is controversial. It's offensive in ways especially to women who have learned to think after the world thinks, and it's abused by men who think after the way the world thinks and we need to hear it as God intends it. But when we understand what God's word says, even though we initially find it troubling, puzzling, even offensive, when you submit to the word of God, you find that the word of God

always brings life and it brings human flourishing, that when you follow God's way, that's the way of life. "There's a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death," Proverbs 14:25. It's one of the Proverbs that's repeated twice in the book of Proverbs. You come across that again. There's a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death. But God's word, God's way is the way of life and what we see in this passage is the essence of what true feminine beauty is in the eyes of God, and we see the evangelistic power of it.

We looked at this last Sunday and we want to continue digging into it this morning. So we're going to read verses 1 to 6, the evangelistic power of feminine beauty. 1 Peter 3:1,

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

Let's pray together.

Father, we come to Your word with thankful hearts that You have spoken to us, with humble hearts knowing that we need Your grace to help us understand, to apply, to obey, to walk in Your truth. Grant us by the power of Your Spirit to see wonderful things in Your law, to see that You truly are good in all Your ways and Your will is perfect. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

We come to the issue of feminine beauty, which he talks about particularly in verses 3 and 4 and describes also in verses 5 and 6; 3 to 6 really pictures this beautiful femininity that Peter is calling the women to whom he writes to seek. And it's important for us to see it in context of the whole of the letter of 1 Peter so I want to take a minute to remind you of the context. Peter is writing a letter to people who are experiencing spiritual opposition. They are a part of a small minority of people, Christians in the Greco-Roman world. They are experiencing hostility, mischaracterization by the world, the people around them, misunderstand them, mischaracterize them so much like what we experience today as Christians in America. They were going through the same kinds of circumstances and he's telling them how to bear up and he's writing in God's providence about a year before a major persecution breaks out in Rome under the Emperor Nero which results in great suffering. And so he's writing to prepare God's people in the mind of God, prepare God's people for the coming difficulties and the present challenges, and he's writing to help them bear up. How can they be faithful? And what do you need to understand to be faithful? And so he writes his letter and he organizes it. The first half of

the book from chapter 1 to chapter 2:12 or 2:11 is about the identity that we have in Christ. He basically says, "Listen, you need to know who you are if you're going to bear up. You need to understand that you've experienced a new birth, that you've been born again, that you've been changed radically in the essence of who you are." This is the gospel. When someone comes to know Jesus Christ, they come to understand that they're a sinner, that they need a Savior, that Jesus Christ has borne in his own body, our sins on the cross. He's taken sin out of the way that those who believe in him are made righteous forever, declared righteous forever by God on the basis of faith alone. When that happens, you have a new identity, you're a new person, you've been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. And so the first half of the book or the first, it's not really half, but it's the first major section of the book, there's only two sections and the first major section of the book is all about knowing who you are. You have a whole new relationship to God. You've gone from being his enemies to being now part of his royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God for his own possession.

This new relationship to God means you have a new, radically different attitude toward life and what we see in the second section, so it's know who you are, that's the first section, 1:1 to 2:11, then 2:12 to the end of the book is now know what to do. In light of who you are, how are you to live? And what he deals with right away at the very beginning of this new section, it started in chapter 2, verse 11, and it continues to the end of the book, he said, "Listen, you've got to understand that you're called to live a different life." A key phrase we've noted in previous weeks is in chapter 2, verse 12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." People look at you and they malign you, they misunderstand you, they slander you, and they say that what you are doing as a Christian and the way you're living is actually harmful. That's the idea of evil-doing. You're doing harm. You're bringing harm to them. You're bringing harm to the world. That's what they say about us. That's why they call it hate speech to say there's two genders and God determines what you are, male or female. It's hate speech, they say. They see it that way. They genuinely see it that way but he says you're to keep your behavior so excellent, so good, so beautiful is the idea in the Greek of 2:12, your behavior is so beautiful that they will see even as they malign you and they keep maligning you and you keep living this way, they will go from being those who slander you to those who glorify God. They will finally be convinced, many of them, not all of them, but many of them will be convinced that though they thought you were doing evil, you actually are living life as God intended it to be lived. You are exemplifying true human beauty and dignity when you follow the Lord.

And that's what he wants to have happen. Peter's saying, listen, in the midst of a world that hates you, as we read about in John 15, they hate you because they hate Christ, how are you to live? You're to keep doing good. You're to keep following the word. You're to keep being transformed into more and more what God intends us to be by his word, taking his word and living it out, and as you do, some of those who slander will shut their mouths and then they will open their mouths after they consider a while your example and they will glorify God. They will become worshipers of the one true and living God. That's what we're called to. That's our high purpose. We're here to win other people to

faith by the way that we live. Yes, by our message, we have to be ready to give an answer. We have to speak the gospel. But he's saying in this section, live the gospel and so he said, keep your behavior excellent. Let your life be so excellent. Your conduct, your way of life be so good and so beautiful that people are attracted to it.

So that's the rubric, 2:12 is the rubric over this section. This is the goal. And then what he does to now say, "What's that look like? What do you mean? What do you mean, keep my behavior excellent, Peter? What are you talking about?" Then what he does, the key word in the next sections is submit. Submit. Verse 13 of chapter 2, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." 2:17, "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king." But submit to the king. Then 2.18, "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect." So if you're a slave, you're to be submissive, you're to be in subjection to your masters with all respect, "not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable." Then in chapter 3, verse 1, the third time that verb appears is in this verse, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands." He's saying the way that you will show the supremacy of... this the first thing I want to talk to you about. How do you keep your behavior excellent? "Where do I start, Peter? I want my behavior to be excellent. Where do I start?" And it's counterintuitive. He says, "Submit. Submit to the ungodly king unless he tells you to sin. Submit to him. Submit to your ungodly employer unless he tells you to sin. Submit to him. Submit to even your ungodly husband unless he calls you to sin. Submit to him."

It's counterintuitive. I mean, you go from darkness to light when you're saved. Everything suddenly makes sense. What I thought was upside down, I thought everything was upside down, what Christians were talking about was upside down. Now I see it's right side up. They're looking at the world the right way, and now I see it. The world's flipped back over and you want me to submit to those who still are in the dark." Sounds counterintuitive. I mean, what do they know? They're godless people, many times. Not only just unbelieving, but godless. I mean, when he wrote this about the emperor, it was Nero, that was a godless man. "Submit to him unless he calls you to sin. Submit to him. Submit to masters, even those who are," as he says, "not just good and gentle, but those who are unreasonable." The idea of the word there is twisted, completely unjust. Submit to them. Then he says, "Wives, submit to your husbands, even if they're disobedient to the word," that is, the idea is, unpersuadable. They will not hear the word of God and that unwillingness to hear the word of God results in a disobedient life. He says submit to them.

Now, the only way that you can make sense of that as a new believer with a new identity, I mean, you know better than all of those people. You know better than the king. I mean, think about it. Do you think you know better than our king? Our president? Our governors? Our congressmen? I mean, we don't have all the information they have, but we certainly think about life a lot more soundly than they do. And you think about those who employ you, your boss, you see a godless man, a godless woman living so much against the Lord and the Scripture says submit to them, place yourself under their

authority. And the same thing for a wife and this to me is the hardest of all, for a woman to place herself joyfully under a man who's disobedient to the word.

It's an amazing, an amazing command. But you know, it makes perfect sense when you see things biblically. Does it make sense naturally? I agree, it doesn't. But when you see things biblically, what's happened when you become a believer? You have a radical new relationship with God. You're now his child and you have a radical new understanding of who God is and how big he is, and you've got to grow and the Scriptures have to inform your mind because it's not natural then to apply this and say, "Well, I'm going to be a more submissive citizen, a more submissive and faithful worker, a more submissive and faithful wife." It's understanding how big God is and what he says in his word, because a radical new life and a new orientation to God means we have a radical new attitude toward human authority. This is what he's calling us to. It was there in chapter 2, verse 13, when he said, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution." Literally, it says every human creation. And then he goes on and says, "Okay, here's one, the emperor, the governor. Here's another, your employer, your master. Here's another, husbands." And he's saying every human authority you're to submit to. And of course we understand that when we look at the rest of Scripture, that it's because we have a radical new understanding of who God is, we have a radical new attitude toward authority because we understand God is ordaining every human authority. He's in charge.

He says that in Romans 13, "There is no authority but that which God has put in place," and he who resists authority resists God, and so the Christian believer now has come to see that God is so much bigger than we ever imagined, that he's working through every single circumstance, in every single relationship, and particularly through every single authority. And so the radical difference is we now have a disposition to trust God, even as we deal with ungodly people over us and he says this is what happens, when this happens with a wife of even an unbeliever, and she learns to trust God, she by her inner beauty, can win her husband. That's the evangelistic power that we talked about last time. Verse 1 of chapter 3, 1 Peter, "They may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

What I want to do this morning is dig a little deeper into this particular passage and we're going to look at three points this morning. This text calls wives to live like this so that the way they live with their husbands will have evangelistic power. The first point this morning is the pursuit of feminine beauty. The pursuit of feminine beauty. The text calls you, if you are a Christian woman, the text calls you to pursue feminine beauty. This applies even to those who are single and also those who are widowed. Yes, it shows itself most clearly in the marriage relationship. What we're going to see is that masculinity and femininity go back to the very creation, Genesis 1 and 2, and God has, though we are all equal before him in status and dignity, there's, as he says in Galatians 3:28, there is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, all are one in Christ Jesus. Yes, that's true. Yet God has given role distinctions from the very beginning, the way he made man, male and female. And so the application of this, though, you don't have, if you're a single woman, there's not a husband that you relate to, it means that you still cultivate these inner attitudes for true beauty and he's exhorting in this passage women to pursue true

feminine beauty, verses 3 and 4 particularly. "Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."

I mentioned last time that this passage, in this passage, the imperative, there's one imperative in the text. There's really not an imperative in verse 1 when it says, "In the same way, wives, be submissive," that's what your English Bible says but in the Greek, it doesn't say it as an imperative like that, "be submissive." It says, "In the same way, you wives, being submissive." It's a participle. It's carrying on from the previous imperative way back in chapter 2, verse 13, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sakes to every human institution." So he starts off with government. That's one human institution. Then he turns to employment. That's another human institution. Then he turns to the family. That's another human institution. So it borrows at the imperative force from the previous imperative. It's a command, yes, but it really puts the emphasis when you understand the imperatives in verse 3, because it says there "let not your adornment be." That's literally the way it reads. "Let not your adornment be external braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on dresses; but rather, let your adornment be the hidden person of the heart." He's saying the pursuit of feminine beauty that this text is calling us to is saying, it's not saying ultimately don't braid your hair, don't wear gold jewelry, don't put on dresses. Of course, it's not saying that, it's saying don't focus on that, focus on the inner beauty of the heart. Let your adornment be the hidden person of the heart. Adorn that which nobody can see, the hidden person of the heart. That's counterintuitive too, isn't it? Beautify that which no one can see. That's like going and redecorate your closet. Well, actually, people do that, you know, make it really cool with all kinds of cool stuff, drawers pull out and everything. But I'm talking about beautify it. Put your prettiest stuff in the closet or the attic. Nobody's ever going to see it. Doesn't make sense. Why would you do that, right? You put your pretty stuff out where everybody can see it. He's saying, adorn the hidden person of the heart. Counterintuitive. Don't do what everybody else does. Now, like I said, he's not saying don't braid your hair, don't wear gold jewelry. He's assuming you will but he's saying, don't let your focus be there, Christian lady. He's saying, let your focus be on that which nobody can see. Make beautiful that which nobody can see, the hidden person of the heart.

The pursuit of feminine beauty begins, this is 1A, the pursuit of feminine beauty is our first point and here's a subpoint, cultivate your heart. Cultivate your heart. How do you pursue feminine beauty? First of all, you cultivate your heart. You make it about your heart. We remember that God looks on the heart. That's what the Lord cares about, the heart. Remember what he says to Samuel when Samuel's going to anoint a son of Jesse king, he doesn't know which son. Jesse brings all of his sons before him, six sons before him, and he sees one, and Samuel in his mind sees that first oldest kid come in. He must look intelligent. He's a strong, strapping man, and he says, "Surely," Samuel says, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me." That's his thought going on in his mind and God says to him, "No, I've rejected him for you and men look on the outward appearance, but I look on the heart." And so they go through all six and he's like, "No. No. No." The Lord's, "No. No. No." All six and that's all the sons he brought and was going to bring

and Samuel says, "I know God sent me here to get one of your sons. You must have another son. Are all your sons here?" "No, the youngest is out tending the sheep. You know, we couldn't send them all away. Somebody's got to stay outside." So he left the young, the least likely to need to come see a prophet, "We left him out there." And he brings David in and he anoints David, "This is the one because he is a man after My heart." A heart for God because God looks on the heart.

So he's saying, listen, he's saying it's natural for women, it's most natural for women in the wiring of a female to want to be beautiful. It's the fairer sex. That's what God said. That's what humanity says. We see it. It's the fairer sex. You want to be beautiful, and it's good and right that you should adorn yourself outwardly to some measure but he says, listen, if you want to be beautiful, focus on that which no one can see. That's where true beauty is found. Cultivate your heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. There's two key words here, gentle and quiet. This is what you have to cultivate. You've got to cultivate gentleness and cultivate quiet. A quiet spirit, a gentle spirit. This word for gentle, translated gentle, is the adjective form of the word meekness. All the translations, major translations translate it gentle, except for the King James, translates it meek. I understand why meek is not a word that we use, it's not a word that we talk about, but it's really a better word than the word gentle for this word, this Greek word, because the word gentle, if you think about it, speaks, you know, the range of meaning of a word, it focuses on the way that this attitude of heart expresses itself. If you're gentle, that is, you have an appropriate softness or considerate awareness about you. You don't just trample over things. You know, you've got to be gentle when you're holding, you know, a baby, right? Especially a newborn. Can't hold their neck up. You've got to be gentle. You've got to hold the head in the right place and everything and you've got to be careful when you lay the child down. You have to be gentle when you hold something very delicate, you know, a beautiful, expensive vase. You don't just go throwing it around like you do other things. You know, you get in your car, maybe you throw your briefcase in the back seat. When you're carrying an expensive vase, you don't do that, you handle it gently, and the idea of gentleness is there's that, it's the touching of the other person, the relationship there but this word that's translated gentle is really not so much about the expression outwardly as the attitude inwardly. It's the inward attitude that is focal in this word and really meek describes that better even though we have to understand what meekness is because we often don't have a good understanding of what meekness is.

So he's saying you do want to have an outward disposition that flows from an inward attitude but if you're going to have the outward disposition, it'd be godly, because this is not talking about just a natural gentleness. Some people are more naturally gentle than others, men and women. Some are more naturally gentle. This is not talking about that. This is talking about an in-wrought grace of the soul. This is talking about Spirit-empowered meekness. You've got to cultivate this in your heart. This, I want to read to you from the "Complete Word Study Dictionary" by Zodhiates. He says this, "The word describing meekness is not a natural disposition, but is an in-wrought grace of the soul, fundamentally its expressions are toward God." That is, meekness is not so much about how you're responding to the person in front of you. It will change the way you respond to the person in front of you but it is rooted in an attitude at the moment toward God. It's

an attitude toward God that affects the way you touch somebody. The attitude toward God is fundamental. He goes on to say, "It's an attitude of spirit in which we accept," listen to this, "It's an attitude of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist." It is an attitude of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist. This leads to meekness. This is meekness. This is the essence, the heart of meekness.

The reason you're able to be gentle to someone is because you understand that what's happening in this moment is not just that person and what they're doing, you are seeing, you have an attitude before God. You see that God is in charge of who this person coming into your life right now. God has allowed them to speak this incredibly unkind word to you even. God has allowed them to be irritable and ornery and offensive to you in this moment. It's not just the person you see. Before I see the person, I see God's hand. You see, God is that big. You see, you change the way you see the Lord when you come to salvation. You come to understand that he's King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules over all the affairs of mankind. He's over the heart of the kings and the hand of the Lord, he channels it like a watercourse wherever he wishes. Whatever happens, happens by his divine decree. Even though men are free, absolutely free agents, able to do their own will, yet God is superintending their choices so that whatever happens, happens by his divine appointment.

You're coming to think like Joseph thought. Remember when his brothers sold him into slavery, when his brothers were going to murder him? They were jealous, they hated him in their hearts, they wanted to kill him. They determined to put him to death, but then one of the brothers says, "Let's don't put him to death. Let's make some money out of him and so let's sell him into slavery." So they sell him into slavery. They take his coat of many colors. They kill an animal, put blood all over it. They go back to their dad and say, "Is this your son's coat?" What callous wicked hearts to do that horrible thing to their father even. I'm sure it probably hurt them and it did hurt them as they saw him mourn, the depth of his mourning, but they hated their brother in his hearts and Satan's at work in that, at work in that, their arrogance, their pride, their vanity. But when years later at the end of the story, Genesis 37, you can read that part, Genesis 50, after Jacob dies, after all that happens, so many things happen, split second timing puts Joseph on the throne or second in command in Egypt, and then the brothers come, you know what all happens, but at the end, after Jacob dies, they come to him, they're terrified that now that dad's dead, you're going to let us have what we deserve. And what does he say? He says, "How could you even think that? How could you think I was going to take revenge on you? You meant it for evil but God meant it for good. See, God was superintending even your evil deed to send me to Egypt to bring about this great salvation. This is how we've stayed alive in the family." This is how he kept his people alive. And not only that, remember, it wasn't just that, it was also Potiphar's wife. Potiphar's wife, wicked seduction, attempted seduction of Joseph, and then slandering him, blaming him, acting like he attacked her when she was the one. Not only that, it was the man, the baker, I mean, not the baker, the cup-bearer forgets Joseph for two years. All of these things happen, all of these mistakes, all of these sinful things happen to get Joseph exactly where he needs to be at exactly the right moment so that God can bring about a great

salvation. If you understand God is like that, then when somebody comes to you and attacks you verbally, your first thought is, "What is the Lord doing in this situation? My Father has this for me today. Not what I would have picked, but my Father knows best."

You see how that changes the way you respond in the moment? It's not, "I can't believe it. Who are you? Who do you think you are?" That's irrelevant. That's a secondary thing. It's not that they're totally irrelevant. It's important that this person be spoken to and responded to but the first thing that dwarfs everything else is, "What is the Lord doing in this moment? What are you wanting to do, Lord? Why have you brought this person into my life?" And that itself, the fear and reverence that you have for God, the loving trust that you have for God, quiets your soul and enables you to respond with gentleness. But it's really, you see, it's meekness being lived out in gentleness.

He's saying this is what wives are to cultivate. That's beauty. He says, cultivate your heart to be meek and gentle. Now, how do you do that? Well, you meditate on the truths of Scripture just like we're talking about. You meditate on the fact and you remind yourself continually of the fact that God has given you this husband. And let's take the worst case scenario, like this passage is talking about. I mean, many of us, you are getting to apply this in your home to Christian believing husbands but sometimes you think are pretty disobedient to the word too. And you're right, sometimes they are. But this is talking about worst case situation. This man is unpersuadable, hardened in unbelief and you're to cultivate an attitude toward him when he shows disdain even for your faith, he belittles your your love for God, he acts as if these things are unimportant, he tramples on holy things. This is the man that I'm married to and yet I'm supposed to cultivate a heart that is meek and quiet before this. How do you do that? Well, you stop looking so much at just what is happening and you start remembering that in the truest sense that he's just an instrument in your Redeemer's hand. God's using him as an instrument and so, "The Lord's wanting to do something in my heart today. Lord, what are You wanting to do in my heart?" And you meditate on that, and you meditate on that, and you remind yourself of that, and you keep reminding yourself of that, and you remind your sisters of that who are dealing with that, and we need other Christians to help us in this so much.

Listen, one of the most important things that I've learned is the longer I pastor is, as a Christian, you need other people to tell you what you already know, and if you don't believe that, then you will struggle with sin far more than you need to because you'll think you're supposed to be able to make it yourself and that's just an ungodly way of thought. All the "one another's" in the New Testament, encourage one another, admonish one another, teach one another, confess your sins to one another, build one another up, we're to be in relationship with other people that they can get into our life and they can say to us what we need to say. And so if you're in a difficult marriage, you need other godly women speaking to you that which you already know. It's amazing isn't it, you've had the experience, somebody tells you something and, yeah, you knew that. It's like, "Why didn't I think of that?" But it was such power when they said it. God intends us not to live as Lone Ranger Christians.

So you need other people helping cultivate your heart but not only cultivate your heart, but discipline your tongue. This is 1B, discipline your tongue. Feminine beauty, to pursue it, you have to cultivate a heart of meekness and discipline your tongue to quietness. The imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. The word quiet means silent. Doesn't mean that you never speak. No, but it means that you're biting your tongue. You're not assuming that the thing that comes to mind in the moment is what needs to be said. Some people have more of a filter than others. I'm trying to cultivate more of a filter myself. You guys get to experience that sometimes when I'm preaching, you're like, "Oh, he shouldn't have said that." But he's saying that particularly for women, this is something we have to cultivate. You need to cultivate as a godly woman, a sense of restraint. "Am I going to speak that which is coming out or am I going to make it bow to the Lord?" Ephesians 4:29 to 32 is a great passage to meditate on. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." Every word that comes out of my mouth for this even ungodly man should be that which is going to give grace to him. Do my words breathe grace?

That's the pursuit of feminine beauty. That's what we're supposed to see. This is how you adorn yourself. You work at a heart that is meek and a mouth that is quiet. It doesn't mean silent, but it means that you're really filtering and deciding, "Is this word edifying?" That's the pursuit of feminine beauty. Secondly, the second major point is the pattern for feminine beauty, verses 5 and 6. The pattern for feminine beauty. "For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands." He says look back at biblical history. Look back at the Old Testament. This is the way the holy women adorned themselves. They adorned themselves in this inner attitude of beauty. They sought to be submissive to their own husbands. Again, it says to their own husbands. Remember last time we shared that the idea of the emphasis of the passage is submission is not female to male in general. No, submission is wife to husband, to your own husbands.

This is how they adorned themselves and then he gives the example of Sarah. "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." Isn't that an amazing statement? I mean, you read that. Wow. What does that mean? You know, some of that was a part of the culture in time. I don't think that, I'm not asking my wife to call me lord, though I might enjoy it. I think it would be unproductive and inappropriate. It's not appropriate. The idea is though, the essence of what's behind it is the principle is still so powerful. He says look at Sarah. He invites his readers to look at Sarah and her example. She obeyed Abraham, even calling him lord. He says look at the example of Sarah's submission to Abraham. And think about that, she followed a man who told her one day in Ur of the Chaldees, good place to live, high standard of living, I'm guessing a little bit, but based on the history we know about the Babylonian area, it's in a region of Babylon, Ur of the Chaldees. He says, "Listen, God appeared to me." He'd never met God before. "Yahweh appeared to me and He said that we need to leave and go to a land He's going to show me. So we've got to uproot everything and we've got to go to a land. He didn't give me any travel brochures, any details about where we're going. I don't have a map. We're just supposed to go." And she apparently said, "Yes, honey." Okay, so they go, and they go to Horan for a while,

then they go to, finally, they go to Canaan, and they spend their whole life in tents, moving about through Canaan, never settling down, never getting to build the house or to establish roots. And she still follows him, trusting that God is at work in him. And I think this is the idea of what happened, she believed that God had placed her with this man, that God was at work in this man, and that even, and of course he was a godly man, so it's a little easier for her than the woman who doesn't have a godly man, but he's saying this example to the one who doesn't have a godly man. You can follow Sarah's example even if you have an unbelieving husband. Why? My husband's nowhere like Abraham, but the God of Abraham is just like the God that you serve. He's the same. He's faithful.

And so obeying him means, listen, to follow him, it's a willingness to follow him and it's a confidence that as I come alongside him and help him in what he is called to do, his success will result in my success, his blessing will result in my blessing. And he says, you're her daughters, you become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. You follow her example if you will just focus your heart on doing good and not being afraid, and the phrase "being frightened by any fear" is a strong phrase. That word "any fear" could be terror. So you're not being afraid of any terror. Normally you're afraid of terror, but no, in this situation, you don't have to be afraid of even the terror. How can that be? My husband's leading me into terror. How do I know that I shouldn't be afraid? Because God is the one who's leading you into that terror and so you can trust the Lord.

Consider their example, consider the biblical pattern. You know, when you look at what it is to be feminine, it's helpful to look back as he's exhorted us, look back at the Scriptures, Genesis 2. The story of creation. Chapter 2, verse 7. Chapter 2 is basically day six. Chapter 1 goes through the first six days of creation, 2:1 to 3. The first three verses of chapter 2 finishes the seventh day. So seven days of creation are hit, the highlights, and then chapter 2, verse 4 to the end of chapter 2, verse 25 is a zoom in on day six, the creation of man and creation of man, male and female in the image of God. He zooms in. He's told us in chapter 1, verse 26, he's going to make man in his image and then he makes them in his image, male and female, he created them. He makes two genders when he makes man in his image, male and female. And then chapter 2 tells us how this actually happened. How did it transpire that God made man male and female? Well, verse 7 of chapter 2, "Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." He made the man, he made Adam. He formed him out of the dust of the ground, he breathed into him the breath of life, he becomes a living being. "The LORD God planted," verse 8, "planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed." He creates the man and he places the man in the garden. This is your work. Verse 9 talks about the trees that are in the garden. Verse 10 to 14 talks about the rivers that flow out of the garden. Verse 15, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." The Lord God puts him in a garden and gives him instruction, "This is your work."

Now what's instructive is he's not yet created woman. He's made man, he's placed him, he's given him his assignment. He's yet not made woman. In fact, look at verse 16, "The

LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" He now not only gives man a job, his life's work, he now gives him his commandment. He speaks the word to him. He gives it to the man. Look at verse 18, "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable.'" It's instructive that God creates man, does all of that, gives him his work, gives him his word, and then he creates woman.

I say this, Paul makes a big deal out of this in 1 Timothy 2:9 to 15 when he's explaining how women are to relate in the church and he says there that women aren't permitted to teach a man. No woman's permitted to teach a man or exercise authority over him because it was Adam who was created first and not Eve and Eve was deceived, not Adam. 1 Corinthians 11:9, he says that woman was created for man's benefit, not man for woman. This is why man's the head. Now this is just the way God has set it up. So I'm trying to tell you as clearly as I can what the Scripture says, because I know that if we follow the Scriptures, we will flourish. We'll be blessed. He knows how he made us.

So he gives the man the work, he gives the man the word, and then he gives the man his helper and even the phrase "helper suitable." She's a completer. She's a counterpart. She's equal in dignity and glory because they're both made in the image of God, according to Genesis 1:26 and 27. But she's the helper. So she comes to help him, he's not helping her. So the essence of masculinity and femininity, the way it relates is femininity basically is created to be the helper to come alongside and offer support. Now I said it doesn't, if you're not married, it's a little different how that looks, but there's still something here to consider in principle form. To help to help him. He's incomplete. And God makes it very clear to the man how incomplete he is. In fact, when you look at the story, I mean, as we know the end of the story, it seems a little silly. The Lord brings all the animals to the man, lets him name them. I talked about this last week. I wouldn't have let the man name the animals. I bet the woman would have done a better job. But God lets the man name the animals, which means authority over the animals. Then he gives the man a helper, but by doing that, he says, "Look, there's no helper for you. Look, all the animals have their helper, but you don't have your helper. You need a helper." He's letting the man know with such incredible clarity that he needs a helper. In fact, the reason he did all this is to emphasize how much the man needs help. Your husband needs help. It's just true, we do. And the help is exactly what is perfectly needed. It's a helper suitable, it's a completer, it's a counterpart. The idea is a face-to-face completion, complementary in the sense of completing, filling. The empty place is filled, everything comes together. And the man's overjoyed, he says, verse 23, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

But what he's getting at, now back to 1 Peter 3, is this is the creation of woman. The wife was given to help the man. So part of it is being submissive is to yoke yourself to this husband. God has already yoked you to him, but in your mind now, you realize, "I'm joined to this man to help him accomplish his goals under God, if he's an unbeliever, I can't help him accomplish things that are wicked and evil, but he has good goals that I'm

here to help him accomplish and I'm going to support him in it and I'm going to follow him in it, and I'm going to trust that God's working in that."

Now, what does it look like to help? Well, it does mean to be submissive. It means to be gentle and to cultivate a quiet spirit that's trusting God, but it means to actively help. Every man does need everything that his wife is. I mean, God has made us so that we are completely dependent upon one another. I mentioned that earlier in the body of Christ, we're completely dependent upon one another. In the marriage relationship, when God brings a man and a woman together, they both need the other person to complete them and particularly the emphasis is on the man's needs. Women are more able to do without. You see this. Something that you see often is when an older man, an older couple, the wife dies, more often than not, a woman can live way beyond her husband dying. Sometimes, it's not always the case, but often you'll see a wife dies, the husband just goes downhill and dies soon. It's just not good for a man to be alone. We need our wives more than they need us and part of the problem is, men, we don't think we do, and we're going to talk about that when we get to verse 7. We do.

What does it look like to help? It means to be pulling for your husband. It means to be supporting him in every way that you can, but it doesn't mean just simply to be a doormat. Submission is not doormat Christianity. That's not it at all. Submission, if you're going to be a godly helper, you're to bring your perspective and your knowledge and your experience completely to your husband every time, all the time. So it does mean that you speak your mind. You say, "I think we need to do this. I think this would be a better course of action." This is why. But submission means that when, after you've voiced your heart and you poured it out and you've even tried to articulate that as clearly as possible, when he goes not your way, you're willing to trust God that God's going to bless you, even though it feels like you should be afraid. "He's going to mess this up. I know it, he's going to mess it up." You're probably right but the thing is God wants him to mess it up then. God must be doing something amazing through him messing this up. This must be one of those things that though somebody else means for evil, Satan's deceiving, whatever's happening, God means it for good. And when you have that underlying attitude of heart, that is something awesome.

That brings us to the last point, the preciousness of feminine beauty. The preciousness of feminine beauty. End of verse 4. After he talks about the beauty you're to pursue, "the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God," two things here, the word "imperishable quality." You know, if you focus on beautifying that which nobody sees, it lasts forever. It's imperishable. You work on cultivating a heart of meekness, you're doing something that lasts forever. You beautify your outer person, that's temporary. You beautify your inner heart, you're changing that forever. That's the idea. And I love this, it's precious in the sight of God. It's like a word that means incredibly costly, incredibly valuable. To who? To God. God sees that which nobody else sees. And you're beautifying your heart, you're beautifying that which God sees and God is saying, when you do this, when you're cultivating meekness and quietness, the Lord looks at that and says, "That is My beautiful little girl. Look how beautiful she is." Don't you want to hear that? Don't you want to

know that your father sees that in you? Isn't that better than anything else? We all should want that. God would be pleased with us, that God would love what's happening in our hearts and he's saying this is what gladdens the heart of God.

We just really need to please one person. The Christian life is really about pleasing one person. It's so freeing when you realize this, you don't have to please anybody else but God. You can't please them anyway. You can't please them all the time. You can't please a lot of people. Some people you can't please any of the time. You go around trying to please people, you just get exhausted. Please God. Be beautiful to God. And I love this, the irony, you focus on the hidden person of the heart, you focus on beautifying that which nobody else can see, it's unseeable, the hidden person of the heart. The word hidden is like, it's the same word, it's *kryptos*, it's in a crypt. You can't see what's in a crypt. It's covered. It's not meant to be opened. It's hidden away. You focus on what's behind that, in that crypt, in your heart that nobody can see. Well, God sees it, but this is the beauty of it, look what it says, back to verse 2, the end of verse 1, they're won without a word by the behavior, the conduct of their wives as they what? Observe. They observe your chaste and respectful behavior. You beautify the heart, that which is unseeable, your husband can't see it. He can't see all the labor you're making at being meek. He can't see how you're pouring over the Scriptures, how you're pleading with God to help you know he's in control. He doesn't see any of that. He doesn't see any changes. It's all happening inside, and yet suddenly he sees everything. Suddenly, his eyes are made to see your respectful behavior, this transformation that has happened, and he sees you're living as God made me to live. You are trusting him. He sees this beauty just comes washing over him, and that's the evangelistic power. He's won without a word. You focused on that which nobody could see, and he didn't see it for so long, you're working, you're trying to change, you're trying to follow Jesus, you're trusting God, you're at work in this, even though I don't know what's wrong with this man. I don't know what's happening with our lives. And listen, you go to him being meek and quiet doesn't mean you don't go to him and rebuke him. Even an unbeliever, listen to this. If your believing husband is abusing you, you call the police. If your unbelieving husband is abusing you, you call the police. I'm talking about physical abuse. If your unbelieving husband is verbally abusing you, you cry out to God and I'm going to talk about what to do there too, if your believing husband is verbally abusing you, you reprove him, you rebuke him. That's a godly thing to do. That's the respectful thing to do because it would not be supporting him or helping him to enable him. You must reprove him and if he won't listen, you take somebody else with you and then you tell it to the church and church discipline comes into play.

So there's a lot of remedies for the believing husband, the one who professes to know the Lord. You need to love him enough to air his dirty laundry and help him. Like I said earlier, nobody gets better, gets sanctified without somebody speaking to them. He needs to come out, quit hiding away his wicked treatment of you and the kids. Unbelieving, it's a little more complicated, but it's still the same essence of the idea. You need to go to your husband and reprove him, and you know he doesn't have ears to hear. "Lord, why am I supposed to go speak the truth to him?" And you go with creativity and wisdom. You go and you say, "Honey," like I said, if he hits you, you call the police but if he's just

being verbally unkind to you and mocking you, you go to him and you say something like this, "Honey, I think that the way you're treating me hurts me deeply. I love you and I want to be a support to you. I want to follow you and help you and become all that you want for our family and what you're doing does damage to me, but you know, the other thing that it does, it damages the way the kids see you. I want our kids to respect you. I do everything I can to help them honor you because you're their dad. You're the head of this home. God has placed you over me and over them and I want them to know that. And so I come asking you to consider when you lose your temper and you say the things that you say, it's damaging the way they see you. It makes it harder for them to trust you. It makes it harder for me, but I know I have the Lord and I'm going to keep trying to show you the love of Christ and the grace of Christ." Do you see that? You're coming alongside him to help him. He doesn't want to destroy his life, not in his better moments. Yes, he's insane. He's a sinner. He's in the dark. He doesn't know which way's up. But reasoning with him and calling him to a better way is a good thing and then it opens the door for the gospel. That opens the door for, "Listen, honey, I know when I struggle with these things, this is what I've learned. Jesus can help you." I don't want to hear about that. "Okay, I understand but you need to talk to somebody. Would you talk to Jim, your friends, talk to them. I know my pastor would talk with you. There are people at church that would talk with you about anger management. You need to manage your anger. We can agree on that, right?"

You see, so that's what help is. Help sometimes reproves. Help rebukes. Love and respect corrects. It's not just, "Yes, yes, honey, whatever you say, whatever you say." And husbands, if you're wanting a wife like that, you're wanting something ungodly and unbiblical. The Lord gave you a helper and you're to cherish her, we're going to see this in verse 7, and to love her according to knowledge, and when we get this right, this is so beautiful that the world who maligns us and says you're all about patriarchy and all that, well, the Bible is, yes. God is a father and it is patriarchy. It's not the way you understand it though, so I wouldn't normally answer the question that way, because they have in their minds all injustice and oppression and all that, it's not true. But God has made it so that man's the head of the family, yes. And we can say that unapologetically because God knows what's best. But if we live this out, then they who malign us will see this is the way family is supposed to be. Look at that, how beautiful it is when a man loves his wife and a wife respects her husband. They're sinners, but look how glorious it is. This is what God has called us to.

The pursuit of feminine beauty, cultivating the heart, gentle, quiet spirit, looking at the example that all the Scripture says, and resolving to be beautiful ultimately to your Father, your heavenly Father, that's the key, and when that happens, it's not going to happen in every circumstance, but he's saying it's going to happen more often than we would expect. They will be won without a word as they observe our behavior, the supernatural behavior of a woman whose heart is changing.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we thank You for Your word. We thank You for the beauty of how You've designed marriage. We want to be obedient to You and walk in your truth. We know we need Jesus every moment of every day, not only to cleanse us from our sins so that we can go to heaven, but to help us overcome our sin each day. Help us die to our sinful attitudes and help us cultivate a heart of meekness and submission. You called every one of us to live under authority with meekness, Lord, and we confess we're just not meek, but we praise You that Jesus is. He was meek and lowly of heart and so approachable and so we can go to Him with our proud hearts in the moment when we need meekness so much and we're not finding it within, we never will find it within, we can run to Jesus and find it in Him. Lord, be glorified in increasingly beautiful lives and increasingly beautiful marriages. We pray this in your name. Amen.