

Authority & Submission in Marriage Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill Today is the last of our conversations loved ones, on marriage. And I would ask you to join me as the time permits us, in talking about authority and submission in marriage. And that refers really to the respective attitudes of the husband and wife to each other, authority and submission. Could I remind you of the obvious advantages that flow naturally from a Christian marriage in this regard as opposed to a secular marriage? You remember, a secular marriage is based on our own wills and I would just point out to you the obvious, that if a man marries a woman because of a wilful desire for physical and emotional satisfaction, then he tends to regard that woman primarily as a function. As someone who will fill a need in his life. As an addendum to his life and he will tend therefore, to have rather an arrogant attitude of authority to that woman. It's the same with a woman, if a woman marries a man primarily to satisfy her wilful desire for company in her old age, or for economic provision for her in her present life, or for emotional and physical satisfaction in motherhood, then she also will tend to regard her husband primarily as a function, as someone who fills a need in her life, as someone who is an addendum to her life and therefore she herself, will tend to have a quiet subconscious, arrogant, authoritative attitude towards him. Now it's entirely different if both are entering into a Christian marriage, and they've accepted reality. That is they have accepted that their needs for security, and for significance, and for happiness can be fulfilled only through a personal relationship to their Creator. And they realize that they are marrying each other simply because God has intended them to marry. Then instead of an attitude of using each other, there springs up within them a mutual respect for each other. Indeed, they regard each other as dear gifts of the Creator to each of them. And the whole marriage becomes an exciting adventure of mutual respect to discover the purpose that God has in bringing them together as man and wife. So it does affect very much the attitude to authority and submission in them. It's the same loved ones, in regard to the reproduction of image. In a secular marriage, so many of us marry primarily to reproduce our own image, or to maintain our own image in the marriage. And in that case, we're always jockeying for position. We're always watching, and observing, and reflecting, in order to make sure that we are the dominate personality or influence in the home. Such a marriage is usually filled with fear, and distrust, and continual suspicion. And in fact, both normally know that that's the attitude of the other to them and it's incredible but it is that secret knowledge that the other person is always looking for a final grip that will give them the domineering influence in the marriage. It is that kind of subconscious subliminal awareness that often results in just an attitude of quiet desperation that fills so many marriages, because you know that the other one is always waiting to get the upper hand. And it is a very tense relationship. It's very different with a Christian marriage. If you marry because you know that God is going to create an absolute new personality through combining the differences, and the distinctions in both your personalities, combining them in a unique way, then the whole marriage becomes a relaxed trusting of God to bring out from the other person the right characteristic, and to bring out from you the right characteristic. And instead of having to maintain a position of dominance in the marriage, you can relax and you can trust God through his daily dealings with each of you by the Holy Spirit to bring forth the strengths from each in order to create the unique personality that he has planned in both your lives. And in fact, that way you can enter into a real freedom from that 50/50 business you know. We all like to say, "It's 50 give and it's 50 take," and that's a man of the world comment and of course everybody agrees with that except those of us who are married know that we're always taking our 50 when she's taking her 50 and at last you're freed from that bluff game and you're freed to see it's 100% give. Trusting the Holy Spirit to keep the other person from dominating you or domineering you. And it's the same in regard to the purpose of the marriage. In a secular marriage, where you set your own purposes a husband and wife enters into the marriage with certain goals before their minds. And maybe the woman has in mind a nice house, and three children, and a nice church and social circle, and security, and comfort. And the man has in mind a satisfying job,

and a home and family that he can be proud of, and an interesting diverse kind of life with good hotel accommodation and room service. And they each have their goals and so often it is a constant clashing of will which alternate with periods of just sullen resentment against each other as one person pushes their goal and the other person pushes their goal. And the whole battle becomes one of authority and there's little submission in either heart towards it and they become like the millionaires who always want just a little more. They always want just a little more authority, just a little more of their goal being fulfilled. And their cry is always, "But you always get your way. I never get my way." In a Christian marriage, where you realize that you're not together to fulfill your own purposes, to have as many children as you want, or to have the kind of home you want. But you're together because God has a purpose that is bigger than either of you and bigger than the marriage. And it is a purpose that is connected with his whole plan to bring the world into submission to his will. Then both of you are drawn beyond yourselves and instead of that fighting of petty wills against each other for little tiny purposes that are so small and so insignificant that you both at times get fed up with the battle, instead of being withered and shrunk to that kind of an attitude to each other, you're drawn out beyond yourselves and you become more magnanimous than you would have been had you been together and you begin to look at each other with an enthusiasm because you know that without the other person you couldn't fulfill the purpose that God has for you. With that person you can, that's why he's drawn you together, without them you couldn't. And you begin to look to the other person and build the other person up so that they will transmit the life of God that he pours through them and that will bring about the purpose that God has for both of you in this world. And so authority and submission becomes a minor issue in a Christian marriage. In a Christian marriage they work beautifully, and there's no bickering, and there's no argument about them, because there's a great relaxation of both people in Jesus. But in a secular marriage it's a constant problem. Now loved ones, the Bible knows nothing of the male chauvinist pig Archie (character in a TV show) who dominates or appears to dominate, maybe he doesn't dominate as much as he thinks, but appears to dominate his poor little timid dingbat wife Edith. The Bible knows nothing of that kind of marriage. And it knows nothing of the domineering overbearing Maude, and her poor little fearful timorous hen pecked husband Walter. The Bible has no plan for that kind of a caricature. Right from the beginning when the early societies give women a position of inferiority and a position of virtual slavery, even in those early days, God stated at the beginning, "I made man and I made him male and female." And right from the beginning the Father has always encouraged men and women to respect each other equally, and to look up to each other, and to treasure each other. Our society today swings from one extreme to the other. When we need more men for battle, first or Second World War, or Vietnam, or we need more men to farm the land, or to build the fences, our society exalts the motherhood part of a women's life. But then when those things are not needed and we're having trouble with population, our society swings to the other extreme and demands that every woman be a career woman and forget motherhood. God does neither of those things loved ones. God says, "You ladies must seek me to find out my will for your marriage just as much as your guy does. You have no more right than he has to do what you like." In other words, you have no right to say, "I like children. Everybody ought to like children unless we're monsters." But you have no right to say, "I like children. I like to stay at home." Any more than the guy has a right to say, "I like bowling and I'd like to bowl every day and not go to work." The Father says, "You have to seek me for my will for your marriage." Because I'd tell you that more marriages are scuttled by the woman demanding that she do what she'd like to do, than by any other reason. And so the Father says, "No, the issue is not whether the woman is a mother, or whether she's a career woman." The issue is not elevating one or denigrating the other. The issue is what does God want you two to do with your lives? Will you find that out and then will you walk in the light of that? Now loved ones, in Christian circles today, and you'll have to understand that this is why I'm giving this thrust to the introduction to the conversation this morning, in

Christian circles today there are many who say a woman's place is in the home. Her place is certainly not in administration or in ruling over men, or in speaking God's word. And the ERA certainly should not pass because you cannot image a woman on the battlefield. Now, I would just point out to you that many of you might not move in Christian circles, but loved ones, that are the kind of attitude that tends to dominate Christian circles. And of course, they have good scriptural backing for it and I'd like to point to some of that in Judges 4. And I think this will put you sisters in your place and we should have no more trouble with you from today on. The big thing you'll notice about Christian circles is they tend to get dizzy because they go around and around. But still Judges 4:4, well maybe you should read Verse 3 because it describes the kind of situation that obviously needs a man. Judges 4:3, "Then the people of Israel cried to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years." Well that's certainly a job for a man. "Now Deborah, a prophetess," no, no we Christian circles know that there are no prophetess because woman are not supposed to speak God's word. My wife probably substituted the wrong quotation here. "No Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time." Well, that's those woman they're all criticizing you know. Except, that judging Israel means that she was governing Israel. That's what it means. Now brothers, let's begin to look at the dear word and stop mouthing these prejudices that we have. "Was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment." Now, these women shouldn't rule over men. "She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abino-am from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, 'The Lord, the God of Israel.'" That's ridiculous women cannot speak God's word. "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. And I will draw out Sisera,'" what's she doing having anything to do with war? "And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand." Well maybe – you know, maybe she can do that stuff on the home front headquarters and he goes and does the fighting. "Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, I will go.'" These cowardly types, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.' And she said, 'I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.' Then Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand men went up at his heels; and Deborah went up with him." And then Verse 12 loved ones, "When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abino-am had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him from Harosheth-ha-goim to the river Kishon. And Deborah said to Barak, 'Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?' So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak at the edge of the sword." Well, the woman can do that but they can't fight so we go on and see in Verse 17, "But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the kind of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael came out to meet Sisera, and said to him, 'Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear.' So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said to her, 'Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.' So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. And he said to her, 'Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say, 'No.' But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drive the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground, as he was laying fast asleep from weariness so he died." I think you have to face it, you know, that men and women can be used by the Father equally. And loved ones, if you say to me, "Oh well, that was an exception." Well, you have to

look up then Hilda the prophetess, and you have to look up Miriam's life the prophetess, and if you say, "Oh well, it's only in Old Testament times." Then look up Anna the prophetess in the New Testament and you have to see that the Father has used woman to speak his word, to administer, to rule over men, to tell men what God was saying, has used them to judge Israel, to make difficult decisions between men and women, between families, to make legal decisions. He has used them to fight in battle. And you know yourself, that every time you say, "Women can't do it," you have to look back over church history and you have to see the Saint Theresa's and the Slessor's who went out into a mission work. You have to see all the women who have been used mightily by God throughout church history. You have to look at a woman like that Mother Theresa in India, and all your arguments against scripture, because you have to argue against scripture to say that women cannot be used by God in these ways, they fall to the ground when you look at what he has done. And I think some of us have a tendency to say, "Oh yes, but what about Jesus? What was his attitude?" His attitude was the same, of equal respect for you sisters. When he was about to face the worst ordeal in his life, the cross in Jerusalem, he turned aside to Bethany where he had two dear friends Mary and Martha, and they were the ones that encouraged his heart for the next few steps that he had to take. And it's the same after his resurrection, he appears first to Mary. The disciples went home, you remember, and he appears to Mary and then tells her to tell the disciples. And it's Mary to whom he speaks first after he was raised from the dead. And if you throw old Paul at us, well loved ones, look at Romans 16 then, because you have to look at him fairly and see all sides. Romans 16:1-3, the first one he mentions in that farewell chapter of Romans, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchre-ae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you." So she has the right to ask, "For she has been a helper of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also the churches of the Gentiles give thanks." And then if you look at Colossians 4:15, "Give my greetings to the brethren at La-odicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house." And so there was a church meeting in the house of this woman and many of the women were mentioned in connection with the churches that met in their houses. In fact loved ones, if you check through the New Testament you'll find that at a time when society itself apart from God was domineering woman and was putting them down, the early church was lifting them up and giving them their rights. And you remember Paul does that in relationship to a woman, he says, "A woman should stay with her husband until he dies and then when he dies she's freed to be married to another." But it was the early Christians that give sisters the place of dignity that their Father had originally given them but that society, I suppose, because of its fearfulness had taken from them. And if you say, "Well, what about those passages?" Well loved ones, let's look at the worst one 1 Corinthians 14. You ladies, I'm doing all your arguing for you, but I'm so anxious loved ones, we're meant to be ahead of society not behind society and God started off ahead of society in this. 1 Corinthians 14 and the famous passages you remember, Verse 33, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." Why does Paul say that when he obviously regards Aquila as a fellow worker and asks the men to respect the other women who have suffered with him? And obviously loved ones, it's the same reason as explains his attitude to slavery. Why did he not attack slavery? He didn't you remember, he didn't attack slavery. He told slaves to be faithful and obedient to their masters, and you know the answer is that God gave him wisdom to know which battles he had to fight at that time and which battles had to be left to other soldiers to fight later on. And so Paul did not allow himself to be distracted into defending or opposing slavery, he concentrated on Jesus and his resurrection and ascension and so it was in regard to women. At that time women had no legal status. At that time

the only women you could find with short hair, or without something on their head was prostitutes and infidels. Those were the only two types of women that you could find without any head covering or with short hair. And so Paul advised the Christian woman, "Do not do anything that will distract people from Jesus, and from the glory and the dignity of our calling. This is our Creator's church that we are about to begin to spread and so don't let's put loved ones like yourself into positions of responsibility for teaching and for establishing the beliefs of a new operation at a time when you yourselves are regarded as uneducated and as having no legal status." And so he encouraged them to act in the light of the conventions, and customs, and really he gives the clue himself, he says, "For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says." And he always encouraged the early Christians to respect the law even where it meant respecting a military government that was domineering them, and even when it meant putting up with slavery which was not God's ideal will. Now loved ones, I think that that partially explains some of those comments of Paul that he was speaking to a specific situation with specific problems.

What is our attitude to each other in marriage? Well, it's Ephesians 5 loved ones, that's it. Ephesians 5:21, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." You ladies are good at some things, and we guys are bad at some things, and sometimes it's the other way around and that's the strength of God bringing us together not only in a body like this, but as married partners. And we're to be subject to one another, and we're to listen to the Holy Spirit as he tells us when the other person is right. And we brothers had better be careful that we don't categorize where we're so brilliant. I felt I was absolutely brilliant in buying cars. Now, after many experiences I've discovered differently. So, don't categorize your dear sister, or your dear brother, let the Holy Spirit show you who is strong and who is weak in what area and be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Out of reverence for Christ; not because the other person is worthy of your respect. Really, I think a lot of us get into trouble in our marriages because we say, "He's not worthy of respect. He's not a spiritual giant." Or, "She is not a good housekeeper so why should I respect her?" "Why should I respect him?" That's not the point. God says, "You have to respect each other out of a reverence for Christ because he is the one who has brought you together." And of course, you always find that the more you respect the loved one, the more confident that loved one becomes. The more you show content for a love one, the more lacking in confidence they become. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord." Not because they are worthy of it, but as to the Lord. Treat them as the head of the home. There's a time in every partnership where there needs to be an awareness of who makes the decisions. On a ship you can have a lot of people advising but you have to know who acts when there's a quick decision to be made. So in a marriage, there should be a general understanding, alright, the guy, when the time comes when you can't consult then there's one of you that knows he's to act. But really, you avoid that kind of action as often as possible. You spend time talking with one another, discussing with one another, sharing with one another so that it is a mutual action. But where a decision needs to be made fast, then there has to be an understanding that somebody is the head of the home. "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior." Christ doesn't come to the church and say, "I'm your head, okay? I'm going to be your head." He doesn't, he wins his headship. He gives his life for us and there's a spirit of love that comes out from us and says, "Lord Jesus, you are our head."

And so it is with men and women, no man can make himself the head of a home. A man wins that position by his love. Now, I agree with you, the woman should give him that position even if he's not worthy of it, but the man himself has no right to dominate. He has not right to call her to the letter of the law. Brothers, you've lost the battle if you're back to the letter of the law. You've lost the battle if you're trying to argue with your dear one on the basis of scripture. You've already lost that battle and you'll never win it except by giving yourself for your dear sister and in that way the Holy Spirit will put in her a deep love and a deep trust in you. But

that's why Paul says you know, "We're to love as Christ loved the church and we're to be heads of the woman as Christ was head of the church." He was head of the church by being its Savior and that's what Paul says. "As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." And that's the way a man is to love his wife, to give himself up for her. To put himself last, to let her go all the way in front of him, and that way her love will come to him. "That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." And so the man's concern is always, "How can I make this woman of mine more beautiful? How can I fit this woman more for eternal life with our Father in heaven?" "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." And you wouldn't take your finger and cut it off, you wouldn't. If the finger was cut you'd bandage it up carefully because it's part of yourself. So it is with the wife, when she makes a mistake you don't glory in the mistake, you try to cover the mistake up. So it is with the husband, you're not eager to find him wrong in something wives, but you're anxious to cover up, you're anxious to make him look better than he really is, not make him look worse than he is. "Even so husbands should love their wives." "For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.'" Loved ones, it seems to me that it's a beautiful cooperation and that where there is some authority spiritually, it's something that the Holy Spirit brings forth in a beautiful way. And he brings it forth, and if he doesn't bring it forth it isn't going to be there anyway. I remember my wife and I had no difficulty with our relationship to each other until we went to a spirit filled meeting where two brothers laid on us the authority of the husband over the wife. We argued the whole way home. Of course, it's obvious that it's beautiful when the Holy Spirit brings it about, but if you start trying to hammer it into each other as a letter of the law, you'll enter into something that is not God's will at all for you. Okay loved ones, do you want to ask any questions or push me a little on things? Question from the audience: What do you do when your wife takes it according to the letter of the law, and takes the attitude, "Well I've got to listen to you because the Bible says I do."? Reply from Pastor O'Neill: Well, it seems to me it's vital to get over to the dear sister that she can forget that and get close to Jesus, and find out how Jesus wants her to love you, and how Jesus wants her to behave in the relationship, and encourage her not to abide just by the letter of the law but to deal with Jesus in prayer so that he's able to give her his heart for her husband. And I think that's what you've to minister to her brother, to free her from that kind of dominating attitude. And I think that honestly, a lot of it can be done by our loving our wives. I think some of that attitude may be because of our own kind of iron, unthinking, insensitive emphasis on the letter of the law. And I think therefore, it is going to be the softness of our heart that is going to help them to get out of that. Question from the audience: Where does this leave woman as far as being pastors of a church? Reply from Pastor O'Neill: Or, you may as well put me right against the wall and say elders of the church. Loved ones, I really am willing to go as the Holy Spirit guides us. And I am inclined to feel that it is a bit like some of the dear brothers and sisters here in the body, and maybe the husband is black and the woman is white and for years you remember, we used to argue, "Oh, you're going to have big problems." The problems are no bigger in that kind of a marriage than they are in any kind of marriage, the backgrounds are very important and it's very important to understand where the other person is. And I think it's the same with brothers and sisters in the eldership, I think that you'll get some sisters who are suitable and some that aren't, and you'll have some brothers who are suitable and some that aren't. And it seems to me that we can afford to be led by the Holy Spirit. I would ask you to love me and be patient with me and forbearing, as we begin to gather strength, so don't ask me

appoint five elders, women, this morning. But I would say loved ones, if it's any encouragement to you sisters, I'm willing to go as the Holy Spirit guides and I'm willing too, any brothers who are here who say, "Oh, you're running yourself into trouble," I'm willing to listen to you, and willing for us to share and discuss the thing through. But I would say just because a woman is a woman it seems to me that is no reason for saying she can't be an elder in a church, or a pastor. I think it depends on the woman and that's the key with the man, it depends on the man. But you have to look and see that there are many women who have been used mightily by God loved ones.

Question from the audience: What do you think about career women who have children? Reply from Pastor O'Neill: It seems to me sister that many of our sisters have sensed that there are important years when they need to be with the children all the time. So, I think there are many sisters here in the body who would really like to be in Fish, but they feel that they should spend a certain amount of time with the children until they come at least to kind of nursery school age, two and a half, that kind of time. And I think most of us would feel that way. I think even that can be got around by us having our own nursery here in this building so that it would be very possible for a woman to be involved in Fish here and yet to feel very close to her children that would be in some of the rooms here on this floor. But I think normally outside that situation, most of us have felt it's important to be with the child up to two and a half. It seems to me after that time, then many children do go to nursery schools and then it is possible to arrange some kind of part-time work. Now, if you say a career woman that is going full blast, eight hours a day, then it seems a little difficult to avoid giving the child a sense that they are not loved, or that nobody really cares for them, and there I'm sure you would get into difficulties. My wife is a career woman, if I could see her, but she hasn't children but she is sneaky and she hides. The rat is sitting somewhere else. I don't know, that's what I would say loved ones. Do any ladies want – oh, I see, there you go. Is that right? I'm glad you obey Paul. You should come up and I'll introduce you. Oh yes, this time I won't be put off. Oh, this is my wife. She says there'll be no lunch if she has to go on the stage. She is a career woman, a dentist, but we don't have children and so that difficulty doesn't arise. I do think that we'd both say that if you're both very busy professional people, I think there is required great wisdom, even if your relationship as husband and wives, whether there are children or not, it seems to me there is great wisdom required in order to preserve a home.

Question from the audience: How do you deal with the situation where a woman is married to a non-Christian husband? How much do you submit there and how much do you not? Reply from Pastor O'Neill: It seems the general principle that one would follow is the verse in Acts, where you remember, the disciples said, when they were forbidden to speak in Jesus name, "We must obey God rather than man." And it seems to me that's the general principle that would govern a woman in that kind of situation, that when the husband commands her, or forces her, or attempts to force her to do something that really keeps her from God then she has a right to disobey and not to submit. It seems on the other hand, that she should be very careful to know when those moments are and that in every way possible she should try to be the picture of a scriptural wife and a scriptural woman to that dear brother because that way he himself will feel more willing and ready to deal with God. And so there's nothing as off putting to us men as having a preaching woman who is always telling us we should get to church or we should read the Bible. I think we very easily feel pursued and persecuted when she does that. So it seems to me great wisdom is required in that situation that a woman will submit in every possible situation and in every possible way, be a true picture of a Godly woman to the man. But when it comes to those moments when he either for instance forbids her to go to church, or forbids her to have fellowship, then I think she is obligated to obey God rather than man. I would think. Of course, if I may say dear sisters, that a lot of us, both husbands and wives who are married to non-Christians, have a lot of our troubles because we talk to them too much about God and talk to God too little about them. So, you know, we don't – I don't know whether that's guys or girls clapping, but I think that's true, that our troubles come because we don't pray

enough for them and we preach too much to them. Question from the audience: A woman can be a protector to a man in his work during the day by praying for him and a woman has great power in that way. Yeah that right. Question from the audience: What about Christians dating non-Christians? Reply from Pastor O'Neill: Loved ones, I started off from a very liberal position in theology and when I was at university thought that was just the narrowest kind of scriptural verse you could ever quote, "Be not unequally yoked." But now, after my own marriage, and after seeing hundreds of loved ones in difficulties themselves, it is madness to think of marrying someone who differs with you on something as deep, and intimate, and important as God and your relationship to him. And I think you may as well commit yourself to a relationship of constant strain and unhappiness, as give yourself to one who is not a Christian. And of course, if you're dating then all you're doing is leading up to that marriage and I think it's just foolishness. I think – loved ones, get clear of the idea that it involves being prudish. No it's nothing to do with being prudish or being afraid, but it's just that you cannot move towards God in your own inner life and move away from him in something as important as a man/woman relationship. And I think you're just foolish ever to fiddle around at all with loved ones who are not Christians in any kind of emotional relationship. And those dear ones among you who are – you know, we're all so big hearted, we're doing it just to help them. And we used to do that at seminary, we used to go out with girls just to help them and it's just blatant hypocrisy. It's just – we're lying in our teeth, because the truth is, if you are involved with someone in an emotional relationship they cannot tell whether they're accepting Jesus for Jesus' sake or for your sake. They cannot distinguish between their motives for one moment. So, those of you who are involved with guys or girls who aren't Christians in an emotional relationship, I think the only hope you have of being any help to them is first of all by breaking the relationship into an ordinary friendship, and then you can pray for them with an unselfish motive, and they have some slight chance of receiving Jesus for his own sake and not in order to preserve the relationship with you. Question from the audience: Should a single woman submit to the men as married women? Reply from Pastor O'Neill" I think following loved ones, and maybe if you haven't listened to our discussion of celibacy two weeks ago, it might be good to get the cassette and listen to it, or watch the video cassette of it, because there you remember, we shared the beautiful relationship that God wants us brothers to have to you sisters in the body. And how really, we're intended to have every experience of intercourse outside that of physical intercourse which leads to children; we're to have every other experience of intercourse with you intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. And in that way, sister it seems to me the woman are to have the same relationship to the men in the body as wives have to their husbands, yeah, I would think. And of course, that's one of the beautiful things about the body of Jesus that it means no woman ever feels on her own. No woman ever feels that her husband will die, or that she'll be left as a spinster lonely, because she knows that the brothers have that attitude of closeness to her, and will always protect her, and will always be with her. And that's the vision God has given us for this body and that's what the brothers and sisters are involved in who feel themselves part of this body. And of course, it's the way every body of Jesus is meant to be, so that none of us are ever lonely, none of us are ever left without somebody to show love to us, and with loving hands to put us into our Father's hands. And that's his vision loved ones, for us. And I would ask you all to take part in the creation of such a community, really. I'd ask you to do it. You can live in your own houses, you can do your own jobs and still take part in creating such a community because that is God's will for us and that is what this dear old world needs to see, a body of brothers and sisters who love each other as much and more than they do their own blood relatives. When the world sees that, it will stop and say, "The kingdom has come here to earth." And I pray that the Holy Spirit will do that among us and that we'll grow closer and closer to each other in love, and in care, and in concern, and further and further away from that old church idea that you see each other on Sundays and then you suffer through the week on your own. I pray that

God will make us a family together. Let us pray. Dear Father, we thank you for all your truths about our relationships to one another in marriage. We thank you Lord, for the truth that you have brought out over these Sundays. And we thank you for the beauty of your plan. And Lord, we pray now that through the power of your Holy Spirit, you will make that plan real in us as a body, in our relationships with one another as brothers and sisters, and then in our homes as husbands and wives so that this dear world of yours may see what your original plan was when you said, "Let us make man in our image." And then male and female, you created us. Thank you Lord. Thank you. Amen.