

Red Flags

Built To Last

Sermon Recap

Pastor Jared teaches that God's design for marriage isn't a contract built on protecting personal rights, but a covenant that reflects Christ's relationship with the church. Because marriage is meant to mirror the gospel, it requires humility, obedience to Scripture, and a willingness to do relationships "God's way" rather than following a culture of self-preservation.

A key principle is mutual, voluntary submission: submission is not something a spouse demands, but something each spouse chooses to give "out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). This kind of marriage doesn't work through power, control, or keeping score; it works through sacrificial love and shared responsibility.

He explains that covenant marriage involves giving up certain "rights," grounded in Genesis 2: - Giving up the right to be first: after marriage, your spouse becomes your top human priority, protected from competition—even from extended family, busyness, or a child-centered home. The strongest security for children is seeing mom and dad prioritize each other. - Giving up the right to personal ownership: marriage means "ours," not "mine." Using money or resources as leverage (like allowances or control) is described as toxic and harmful to a home. - Giving up the right to keep secrets: covenant requires openness and honesty. Isolation and hiddenness erode trust, while being fully known—without fear—builds security.

He then highlights responsibilities couples must "pick up," especially from Ephesians 5: - Love unconditionally: not love based on performance, but love modeled after Christ, who loved first and loved while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). Covenant love is decided in advance, even on hard days. - Honor respectfully: to honor is to place value on your spouse. Husbands are called to be considerate and never use strength to intimidate, threaten, or abuse; that has no place in a God-fearing home (1 Peter 3:5–7). Dishonor damages both the relationship and spiritual life. - Live with a Christlike mindset: relationships flourish when both people adopt the humility and self-giving mindset of Jesus (Philippians 2:5).

Throughout, he stresses that great marriages don't happen accidentally—they require intentional effort, preventative maintenance, and hard work. He also encourages practical support through marriage life groups and calls the church to respond personally to the Holy Spirit's conviction, whether someone is married, preparing for marriage, or healing from past pain. The sermon closes by connecting these marriage principles to faith itself: God must be first, control must be surrendered, and nothing should be hidden from Him.

Submission— please, please hear me— isn't something that we demand from our wife. It's something that we give to our wife. We don't demand this from our husbands. We give this to our husbands.

Discussion Questions

How does the idea of “mutual, voluntary submission” reshape the way you think about power, rights, and responsibility in marriage?

Mutual submission reframes marriage from a competition for control into a shared commitment to serve. It invites each spouse to ask, “How can I go first in love?” rather than “How can I get my way?” This can uncover where self-protection or entitlement has quietly become normal.

What does it look like in real life to “give up the right to be first,” and what tends to compete for that top priority in your home?

Practically, it can show up in choices around time, attention, schedules, and how you speak about your spouse in front of kids or extended family. Competing priorities often include children’s activities, work pressure, phone distraction, or family-of-origin expectations. The conversation can move toward one concrete change that protects the marriage relationship this week.

Why do you think the sermon connects covenant love to loving without conditions, and how does that challenge common “contract” expectations in relationships?

A contract mindset says, “I’ll give as long as you give,” but covenant says, “I’m committed even when it’s hard,” reflecting Christ’s love shown in Romans 5:8. This challenges the impulse to keep score or withdraw when disappointed. It also raises the question of how to pursue faithfulness while still addressing real hurt in honest, healthy ways.

What kinds of “secrets” most easily create distance in a marriage, and how can openness be practiced in a way that builds safety rather than fear?

Secrets can include hidden spending, private messages, addictions, unresolved resentment, or even emotional isolation and unspoken anxiety. Openness builds safety when it’s paired with gentleness, listening, and a commitment not to punish honesty. A helpful step is agreeing on a small, regular rhythm of check-ins where truth is shared with care.

How can honoring your spouse respectfully change the tone of conflict, especially when you strongly disagree or feel unheard?

Honor treats your spouse as someone of God-given value, even in tense moments, which can shift conflict from winning to understanding. It often changes language, volume, timing, and willingness to own your part. Practicing honor might include pausing to pray, restating your spouse’s perspective fairly, and choosing words that protect dignity.

Prayer 🙏

- May we choose mutual, voluntary submission as a daily practice—placing the other's good ahead of our own preferences out of reverence for Christ.
- May we release the right to be first by intentionally prioritizing our marriage and protecting it from competing demands, especially in busy seasons.
- May we embrace covenant oneness by treating time, money, decisions, and intimacy as "ours," replacing personal ownership with shared stewardship and trust.
- May we live as open books with one another, refusing secrecy and isolation, and building a home where honest confession and gentle listening are safe.
- May we reflect Christ's love through steady humility—honoring one another with respect, offering unconditional care on hard days, and taking one practical step of obedience this week.
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