

Empire Church of the Brethren  
Sunday Service Sermons

17 May 2026

The Witnessing Woman

Text: "Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives." *1 Peter 3:1-2*.

So, women do you like to be told to be submissive?

No one likes to be told to be submissive, male or female.

You know what, both mates need to be submissive to the other. And especially to God.

That is putting them first.

Now, let me tell you your proper response to a male telling you to be submissive.

You just say, if you were the man that is described in the Bible I would be more than willing to be your helpmate even to being submissive to you.

If you were God's man I could be God's woman to and for you.

Put it back on the male to be what God wants them to be so the woman can be what the Bible tells them to be.

I have a personal story about this dynamic in my own life.

Kathy and I were both very strong people.

At one point in our relationship she decided that I was going to be more trouble than I was worth so she said she wanted to stop dating.

I did not handle it well at all.

So when we got married we began life in contention for power and control.

There was strife in our home and relationship.

I would be happy in the orchard but up tight as I entered the house.

Then all of a sudden that strife and tension was gone.

I asked Kathy what had changed and she said she decided to see what would happen if she obeyed and let me lead.

It allowed me to be a much better husband and father.

With leadership comes responsibility.

Men never forget the giving your life for her part of this.

Today's sermon is about the impact a Godly woman can have.

Marion Talley was a singer and a witness to her faith.

She and her mother were visiting at a mountain resort in Colorado on a Sunday .

Marion asked if there were any religious services in the village.

She was told that there were many people who would meet the train and spend the remainder of the day at a rooster fight.

There would be no need to try to have a service until these events were over, and even then only a few people ever attended a religious service.

When the rooster fight began, Marion found the little church, sat down at the organ, and began to play and sing.

People heard her beautiful music.

They slowly began coming in; after a while the church was packed.

Someone asked her if she would talk to them.

She said: "I am Marion Talley, and I am a Christian.

If you would know the reason, there she sits before you.

I cannot preach a sermon, but I can point you to one.

My mother's beautiful life is the greatest sermon I have ever heard and accounts for who I am as a Christian."

This was a witnessing woman.

Peter describes a witnessing woman to us as well.

In first Peter he is dealing with relationships.

Relationships between citizens and governmental authorities, slaves and masters, husbands and wives.

The particular problem Peter tackles is that of a Christian wife with an unbelieving husband.

Peter asserts that a witnessing woman can lead her husband to Christ by the quality of her life.

Many of us are Christians today because of a witnessing woman: mother, grandmother, aunt, Sunday School teacher, neighbor.

On this Sunday following Mother's Day let us broaden our focus a little.

Consider the Christian woman, a mother perhaps, who functions as a witnessing woman not only to her husband but also to her family and to the larger community.

The witnessing woman accepts a principle.

A principle of submission.

The passage begins with the words, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands."

In the same way refers back to *1 Peter 2:14*, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men".

This is the Christian principle of submission, the willingness to put oneself second.

William Barclay called it, Voluntary selflessness.

Remember where Peter's first readers were in Christian development.

In Roman practice the wife was a possession.

In Hebrew thought she had a slightly higher status, but not much.

Christianity then taught that in Christ there is no male or female, bond or free, Jew or Greek.

That was heady stuff.

But with these new rights and privileges came Christian freedom.

This liberty included the Christian's freedom to forgo all rights.

Notice, too, that Peter spoke of principles and responsibilities rather than "rights."

What this means, then, is that submission is the liberating response to serve.

It means that a spirit of selflessness should pervade the marriage relationship.

Submission does not mean submersion.

A principle that works.

Does it work?

Can a witnessing woman win others by the quality of her life and the willingness to submit herself to others?

Listen to the testimony of Augustine about his mother, Monica: "When she came to marriageable age, she was bestowed upon a husband and served him as her lord, and she did all she could to win him to Christ, speaking to him about Christ by her deportment, whereby Christ made her beautiful and reverently lovable and admirable to her husband. Finally, when her husband was now at the very end of his earthly life she won him to Christ.

The witnessing woman adopts a practice.

The burden of this passage has to do with the conduct and the character of the Christian woman.

By these twin approaches, conduct and character, she adopts a practice that attracts people to

Christ.

Conduct: "They may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives."

Their very conduct will point to Christ.

Character. Character is emphasized.

What makes a woman attractive?

In the end it is character.

Christ like character attracts people to Christ.

The witnessing woman avows a purpose.

The purpose is to make the home Christian.

Sam Shoemaker once observed that a Christian home is not one in which the relationships are perfect.

Rather, it is one in which the imperfections and failures are acknowledged and where problems are worked out in prayer and obedience to the light God sends.

The purpose is to make the home a base for Christian witness and a means for witness.

The witnessing woman seeks to make Christ known to others.

A mother has this opportunity to witness for Christ as she makes her home Christian.

Christ first, service second.

Loving as he loved us.

Laying down his life for us.

Such is the most powerful testimony.