

1. I'm going to begin a new sermon series today.
2. I have nicknamed this series, "My Favorite Sermon Series Ever".
3. Now. I am of course saying that with all the sarcasm I can muster up. Because when I tell you what the subject of this series is about, I'm guessing your reaction will be similar to every other person I have told about the series.
4. Which is to make a face and display body language that says, I don't even want to be near you right now. LOL.
5. But my prayer is that even before we get to the end of this series you will be able to say with all sincerity, this is my favorite sermon series ever.
6. Because the principles I am going to share with you really set the stage for us to be successful not only in our relationship with the Lord, but with every other person in our life.
7. Through this series we are going to discover what is healthy. What is unhealthy. And even what is damaging or destructive. So that when we see it in real life, we will be able to identify it.
8. But we are also going to learn how the Lord would have us to respond to what is healthy, unhealthy, and destructive.
9. So here it is. The moment we have all been waiting for. Drumroll please. The subject of this series of messages is...
10. **Submission.** Let the eye rolling and the body contorting begin.
11. Submission. We are going to discover what is healthy submission, what is unhealthy submission, and what is dangerous or destructive submission, and we are going to learn how to respond in a Godly way.
12. One of the reasons the subject of submission is so unpleasant to think about is because the meanings of the word submission are all over the place.
13. I am a definition guy. I try not to assume that when I read a word in the bible or a book that I automatically know what that word means.

14. So, for a word like submission. A word that is used 26 times in the NIV bible, and 12 times in the KJV bible.
15. For a word like submission that is used in the context of nearly every relationship known to man.
16. I wanted to make sure I understood exactly what that word means. So, I looked the word submission up in several different dictionaries.
17. And the one thing I found all the dictionaries had in common is that the word submission can mean vastly different things.
18. Let's first consider some of the definitions of the word submission that cause a negative response.
19. The first use of the word is associated with wrestling.

**Submission:** an act of surrendering to a hold by one's opponent.

*synonyms:* surrender · yielding · capitulation · resignation · succumbing · defeat · fall

20. So. When I think of that definition of submission. The image that comes to mind is this one.



21. Is it any wonder that our reaction to the word submission is negative when that is what we think of?

22. The second use of the word is associated with a state of being that is considered archaic. Meaning not useful. So, because of that don't be confused that the definition I am giving is a godly definition.

**Submission:** humility; meekness. *synonyms:* compliance · submissiveness · yielding · acquiescence

23. So, when I think of that definition of submission. The image that comes to mind is this one. Being walked on.



24. And then a third definition of the word submission is associated with something completely different. **Submission:** the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.

25. In this case, what is meant is not wrestling someone into submission. It is not walking on someone until they submit. But instead it has everything to do with choice. The person doing the submitting has a choice, and they choose to submit. Look at the similar words for this definition.

26. *synonyms:*

· agreement · acceptance · consent

27. So, when I think of this definition of submission. The image that comes to mind is this one.



28. How many understand that those are three completely different and opposing definitions of the same word?

29. So, as I began to process each of those definitions and began to attempt to apply those to the commands of the bible to submit, I had a lot of questions for the Lord.
30. Lord. When your word says that we are to submit to you. Submit to one another. To submit in marriage. Submit to the governing authorities. Which form of submission are you referring to?
31. And something else God. If what you are referring to is the one where I am being grabbed around the neck and wrestled into submission, I don't like that very much.
32. And it was in the midst of those questions that the answers started to emerge.
33. I began to hear the Lord say, just because all three of those are actual definitions and meanings of the word submission, doesn't mean that all three of them are correct, right, healthy, or even Godly.
34. Of those three definitions only one of them is correct, right, healthy & Godly.
35. What do we mean by that?
36. Let's go back to the picture of the submission hold.



If we look at that idea, and then compare it to the bible, we find several truths.

- No where in the bible does God treat us like that. God does not wrestle us into submission by declaring, you will do it my way or else. In the bible we are always given a choice. We can either choose to receive Him or we can choose to not accept him. God created us with a free will.



- No where in the bible are we told to treat others that way. To grab them around the neck and make them do what we want.
- No where in the bible are we told to accept being treated that way.

37. How about the picture of the door mat?



If we look at that idea, and then compare it to the bible, we find several truths.

- No where in the bible does God treat us like door mats to be walked on. In the bible we are the prized possession that God loves. Loves so much he would send his only son to die for us.
- No where in the bible are we told to walk on others.
- And no where in the bible are we told to be walked on. Instead we are told to treat others how we want to be treated.

38. What's left then is the picture of the people shaking hands.



In the bible, God's relationship with us. Our relationship with him. and as a result, our relationship with others is formed completely and entirely on the basis of

- Agreement.
- Acceptance.
- Consent.

39. So, in the bible, every time we are told to submit, the type of submission God has in mind is this healthy submission where we have a choice.
40. He does not tell us to submit with the intention of being walked on or choked out.
41. How many are still with me?
42. So, I believe often times the problem is not with submission, the problem is in our misunderstanding of what God means by submission.
43. Why is our problem not with submission? Because any person who has ever tried to relate to God or another person has hopefully learned this truth.
44. **Healthy relationships require healthy submission.** In relationships, submission is not optional, it is mandatory. And BTW, that's not my rule, that's God's rule.
45. **Amos 3:3 Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?**
46. Obviously, this is a question. And the question deserves an answer. Can two people walk together if they have not agreed to do so? No, they cannot.
47. Walking together (intimacy, health, experiencing life, happiness, joy) only happens by agreement.
48. There are no healthy dating relationships, marriages, friendships, work relationships or any other kind of healthy relationship if both parties don't agree that a healthy relationship is what they want.
49. And what does that agreement look like? It looks a lot like submission.
50. Remember, one of the definitions of the word submission is agreement.

51. Don't be fooled into thinking that Amos was referring to a simple activity when he talked about two people walking together.
52. I can tell you right now. If my wife and I decide to go for a walk, there are a lot of decisions to be made. And those decisions can only be made when there is agreement or submission.
53. Decisions like.
- Where are we walking to?
  - How much time do we have to take this walk?
  - How fast or slow are we going to walk?
  - Are we going to go straight there, or are we going to sight see along the way?
  - Are we just out to enjoy one another's company, or is this walk for exercise?
54. I can just tell you for us. We very rarely agree on those things, so in order for us to walk together, we have to submit to one another. Because her answers to those questions are almost always different than my answers.
55. I want to go straight there, and she wants to sight see. So, if we are going to walk together, one of us is going to have to submit to the other, or both of us will have to submit and meet in the middle.
56. How many are still with me?
57. So, our truth is this. All healthy relationships require healthy submission.
58. So, the question is not, is submission necessary. Without a doubt, submission is necessary.
59. The question is, what does healthy submission look like and what does unhealthy submission look like.
60. If we go back to our three images, wrestling, being walked on like a door mat, or shaking hands, we will find the answers.

Healthy submission is mutual submission. Both people submit to one another. (shaking hands)

Unhealthy submission occurs when one person wants the other to submit, but they won't submit as well. (door mat)

Destructive or damaging submission is when one person demands or forces the other to submit without being willing to submit. (wrestling choke hold)

61. Don't worry. We are going to apply these healthy and unhealthy descriptions to our messages each week.
62. For the remainder of our time this morning, I want to give you a quick biblical illustration of what these three types of submission look like.
63. Turn in your bibles to Genesis chapter 39.
64. Allow me to give you the lead into this passage so it will make sense.
65. Joseph is one of 12 brothers who all have the same father, but 4 different mothers.
66. Joseph was his dad's favorite. He knew it, and he made sure his brothers knew it also.
67. God begins to give Joseph dreams in which his brothers and mother and father bow down to him, and that was the straw that broke the camel's back.
68. The brothers decide to be done with Joseph, but rather than killing him, they decide to make some money off him and sell him as a slave to some people on their way to Egypt.
69. What follows is what happened when Joseph gets to Egypt.



**TEXT: Genesis 39:1-12** Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. **2** The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. **3** When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, **4** Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. **5** From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. **6** So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, **7** and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" **8** But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. **9** No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" **10** And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. **11** One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. **12** She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

**TITLE: The Truth about submission.**

**INTRO:**

1. I confess when I began to sense the Lord directing me to use this story of Joseph to illustrate what healthy and unhealthy submission looks like I resisted.
2. Mainly because the thought of slavery gives me a sick feeling in my stomach.
3. I know slavery has been around for thousands of years, but the thought of one person owning another person like they are property just tears at my insides.
4. And yet, it was here, in slavery, that we see Joseph experience healthy submission, and unhealthy submission.

**Healthy submission is mutual submission.**

1. Genesis 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.
2. Joseph is sold as a slave to a man by the name of Potiphar, and the first thing he does is submit to his situation.

3. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not saying he liked his situation, that he was happy with it, that he agreed with it.
4. What I'm saying is that he accepted it for what it was. He submitted to the fact that he could not change his circumstances by fighting it.
5. He accepted that fighting it would only make things worse. So, he submitted.
6. How do we know that? Because of the second part of verse 2. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master.
7. All slaves didn't live in the house. Only those slaves who were able to work closely with their masters. Joseph submitted to or accepted his situation.
8. We also know that was true because the Lord was with Joseph and he prospered. He didn't fret and fight. He worked and gave his best and the Lord was able to use that to promote him.
9. And promote him God did. Potiphar notices Joseph. Joseph gains favor, and before long verse 5 says that Potiphar put him in charge of his household and all that he owned.
10. Verse 6 says that Potiphar didn't concern himself with anything but what he was going to eat that day.
11. As crazy as this sounds, Joseph's submission was met with submission on the part of his master.
12. His master submitted control, power, authority, and care of everything he had to Joseph. Joseph submitted and his master submitted. Healthy submission.

**Unhealthy submission occurs when one person wants the other to submit, but they won't submit as well.**

1. Genesis 39:6-8 Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" 8 But he refused.
2. Now, obviously this is unhealthy submission because what she wanted Joseph to do was commit adultery. It was sinful.
3. We will touch more on this in a later week, but God never asks us to submit to sin.

4. If we are trying to decide if we should agree to something, and that something is sinful, decision made. We don't agree or submit to sin.
5. But if we look closely, the type of submission Ms. Potiphar wants is unhealthy for another reason.
6. In this case, Joseph is the only one submitting. Notice what Ms. Potiphar doesn't say.
7. Joseph, I don't think you should be a slave. I believe you should be free.
8. You have skills and abilities and I want to help you buy your freedom.
9. You don't worry about a thing. I will talk to my husband and I will come up with the money to help pay for your freedom.
10. Not on your life. All she wanted was for Joseph to submit to her, and not the other way around.
11. And so, what did Joseph do? He refused. He recognized and said no to unhealthy demands for submission.
12. So that brings us to destructive submission.

**Destructive or damaging submission is when one person demands or forces the other to submit without being willing to submit.**

1. Genesis 39:11-12 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.
2. Yes, it is still adultery and yes, it is still sin. But note the type of submission she wants has become destructive.
3. She is no longer asking him to submit, she now grabs him and demands he submit, all while still being unwilling to submit one single thing.
4. So, what does Joseph do? He runs out of the house.
5. The truth about submission.

**Conclusion:**

1. As we close today, I want to leave you with a couple of wonderful truths to hang your heart on.
2. Joseph was a slave. Joseph was about as low as a person could be on the food chain. But God not only allowed, God blessed him when he accepted healthy submission and rejected unhealthy and destructive submission.
3. As we continue on with this series, nothing that will be said or covered is about you being wrestled, choked, or walked on.
4. Yes, healthy submission is necessary and required for every healthy relationship to exist, but you have the right to confront, reject and get away from unhealthy or destructive demands to submit.
5. That's not who God is, and that's not how the Lord treats you.
6. The Lord invites you to come, he never makes you come.
7. He invites you to accept him, but he never walks on you if you don't.
8. The Lord loves you, but never in a way that leaves you feeling less than anything special.
9. That may be hard for some to accept. You have been the victim of unhealthy or destructive demands for submission, and it has left you hurt.
10. Pray specifically for the release of unhealthy and damaging submission strongholds. Someone demanded or forced you to submit, and it has left scars.
11. Pray instead for it to be replaced with loving, healthy submission to Christ.