

**Built In Christ Jesus:
God's Radical Plan for
Christian Marriage
(Ephesians 5:33)**

1 A Radical New Command



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Marriage in the Roman World of the 1st Century



Apollodorus, politician, 400-350 BC

“We have courtesans (prostitutes) for pleasure, handmaidens for the day-to-day care of the body, and wives to bear legitimate children and to be a trusted guardian of things in the house.”

The courtesans provided companionship and the entertainment for men at dinner parties, which wives did not attend. Their entertainment might be musical, acrobatic, or conversational (some were well educated and cultured), as well as sexual.

–Demosthenes 59.122



Livy, Roman Historian, AD 15

The old Roman ideal was for women to pass from subjection of father to subjection to husband:

“Never while their men survive, is feminine subjection shaken off; and they themselves abhor the freedom which the loss of husbands and fathers produces.”

–Livy 34.1.12

Augustine, Bishop in N. Africa, AD 350-400

Wife-beating was not a crime, nor was it limited to the early years of Roman history:

“My mother served her husband as if he were her master... She even endured his sexual infidelities so patiently that she never had even one quarrel with him on this account... She learned that an angry husband should not be resisted either in deed or even in word. But when he had calmed down and seemed receptive, she used to give him an explanation for her conduct, if by chance he had been imprudently enraged...

Augustine, Bishop in N. Africa, AD 400

“Many women, whose husbands were actually more mild-tempered than hers, bore the scars of beatings on their disfigured faces. But when, in conversations with friends, they criticized the behavior of their husbands, my mother gave them a serious warning about their tongues, advising them that from the moment they had first heard the so-called marriage tablets read aloud, they should think of those tablets as the instruments by which they had been turned into slaves, and that, mindful of their status, they should not be insolent toward their masters.”

1 A Radical New Command

Marriage in the Roman World of the 1st Century

God's counter-cultural command

Ephesians 5:21-33

2 Defining the Terms of the Command



2 Defining the Terms of the Command

“Love” –

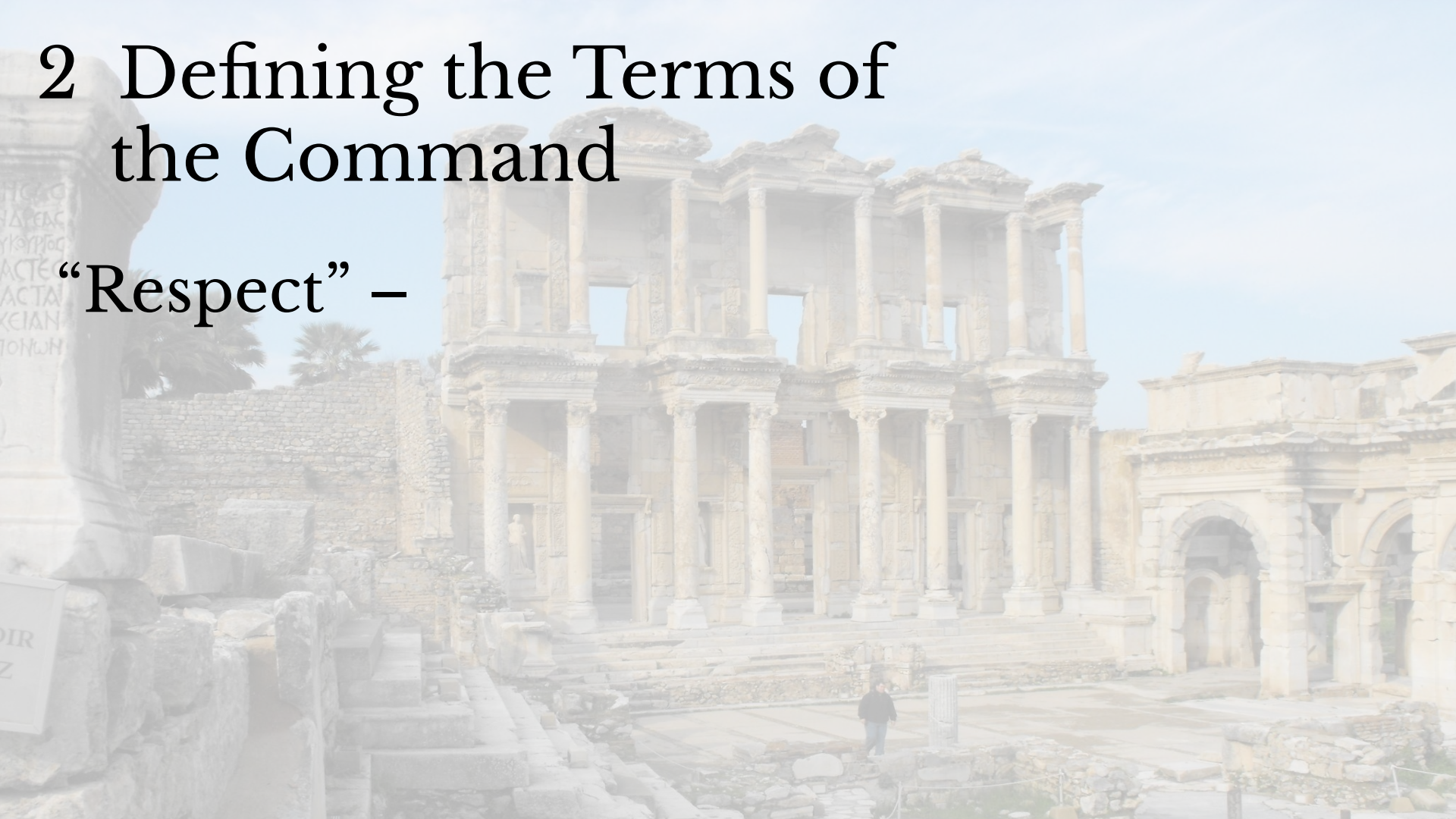


2 Defining the Terms of the Command

“Love” – a *discriminating* affection which involves *choice* and *selection*; to have a **preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of**, take pleasure in, long for; to be full of good-will and exhibit the same (assume the best; to not assume false motives or ill will); the love which led Christ, in procuring human salvation, to undergo sufferings and death (Rom. 5:8); to take pleasure in the person, prize her above other things, be unwilling to abandon her or do without her.

2 Defining the Terms of the Command

“Respect” –



2 Defining the Terms of the Command

“Respect” – to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience; to be astonished, properly, to be struck with terror, of a sudden and startling alarm; to terrify, to agitate with fear; to tremble, predominantly physical; to fear.

2 Defining the Terms of the Command

PROBLEM:

In our modern English dictionary:

RESPECT (**verb**)

Admire (someone or something) deeply, *as a result of* their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

2 Defining the Terms of the Command

PROBLEM:

In our modern English dictionary:

RESPECT (noun)

A *feeling* of deep admiration for someone or something *elicited by* their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

2 Defining the Terms of the Command

PROBLEM:

In our modern English dictionary:

RESPECT (etymology)

Latin *respectus*, from the verb *respicere* ‘look back at, regard’,
from *re-* ‘back’ + *specere* ‘look at’.

3 A “Love & Respect” Marriage



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Loving without conditions

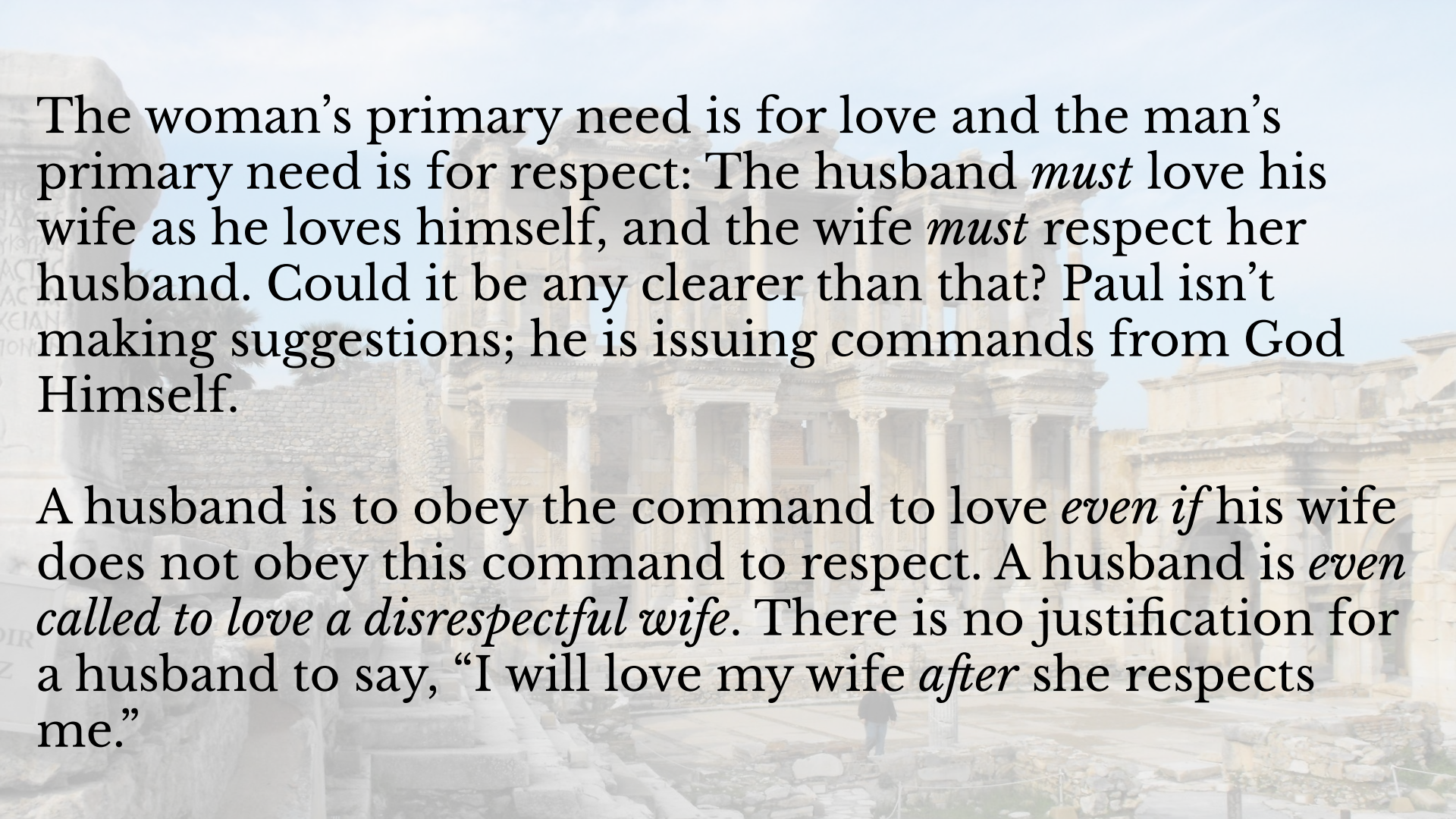


3 A “Love & Respect” Marriage

Loving without conditions

Respect without conditions

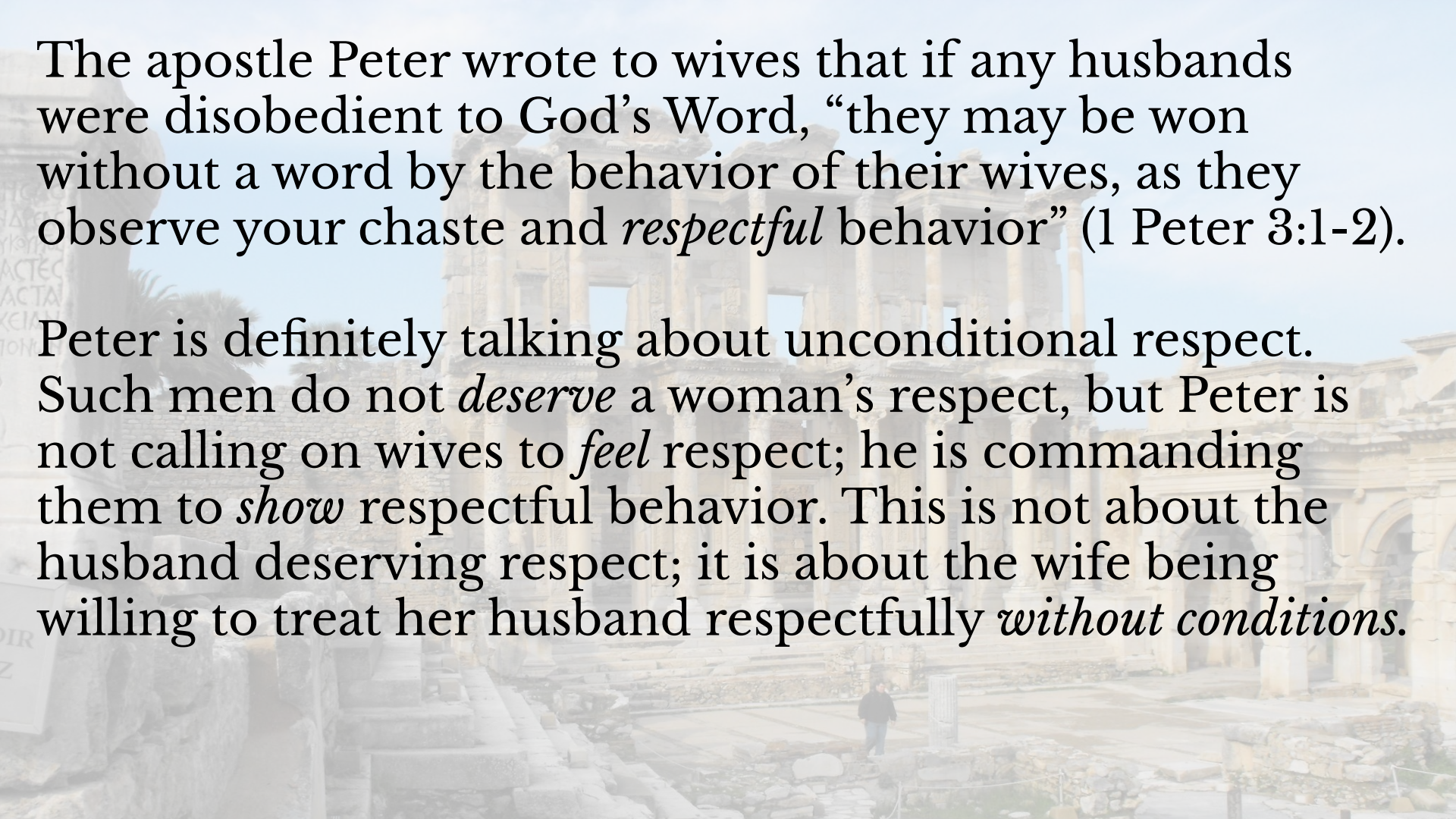


The background of the image shows a faded, historical scene of ancient ruins. In the foreground, there are several large, weathered stone columns supporting a structure. A person is seen walking in the distance on a path. The overall tone is historical and somewhat somber.

The woman's primary need is for love and the man's primary need is for respect: The husband *must* love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife *must* respect her husband. Could it be any clearer than that? Paul isn't making suggestions; he is issuing commands from God Himself.

A husband is to obey the command to love *even if* his wife does not obey this command to respect. A husband is *even called to love a disrespectful wife*. There is no justification for a husband to say, "I will love my wife *after* she respects me."

Christian spouses should not read this verse to say, “Husbands, love your wives unconditionally, and wives, respect your husbands only if they have earned and deserve it.” Some wives will read this and think, “But you don’t know my husband!” Paul knew that no husband is perfect and God (whose word this is) knows it even more! Even so, you will notice that the submission required of a wife is not conditional on her husband getting it right. The passage does not say, “Wives, submit to your own husbands *when they love you or when you think they have earned your respect and deserve your submission.*” It does not say, “When they do their part, then and only then you do yours.” The *only* fine print in this command to respect is in v. 22– “As to the Lord.”



The apostle Peter wrote to wives that if any husbands were disobedient to God's Word, "they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and *respectful* behavior" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

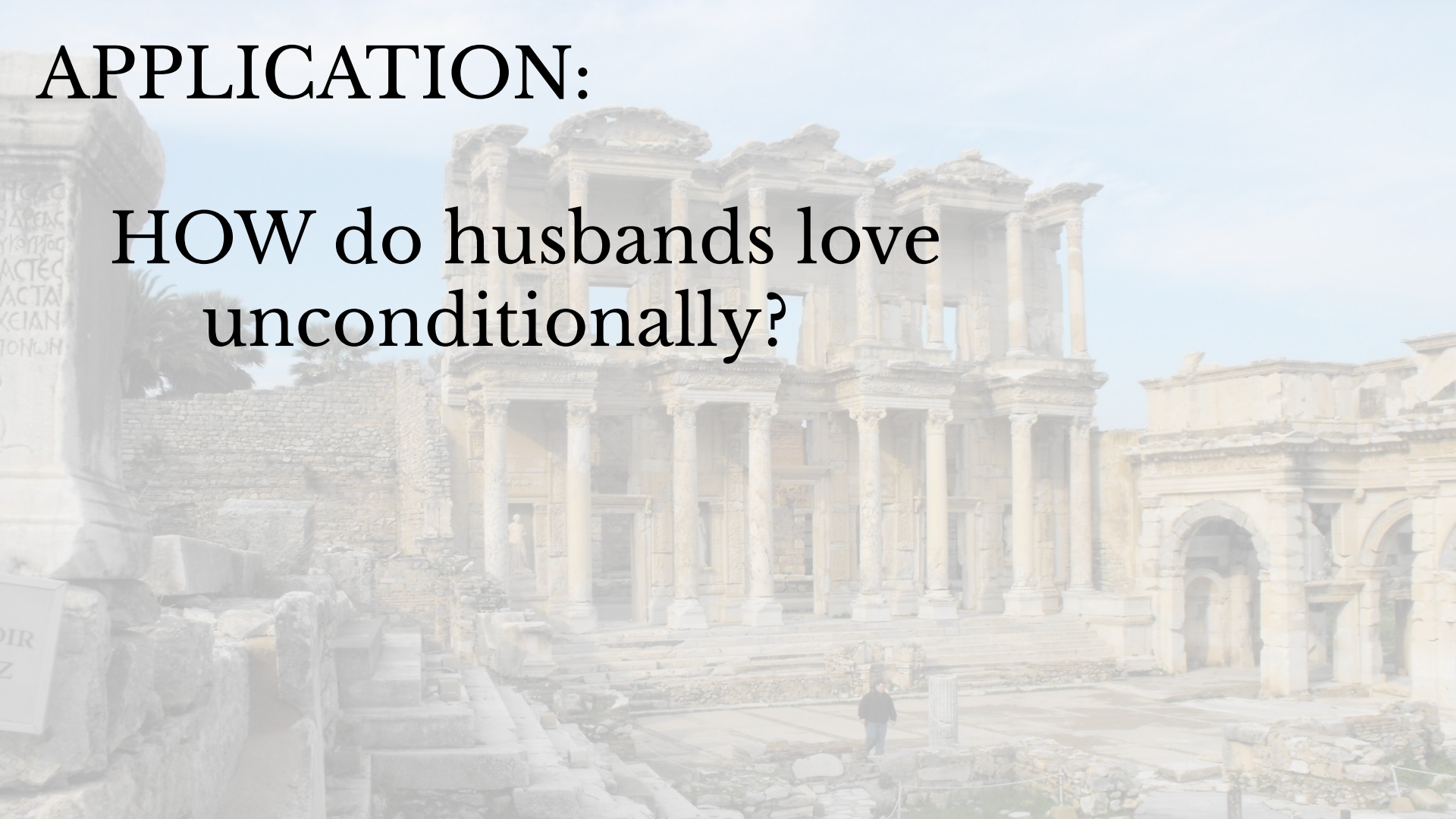
Peter is definitely talking about unconditional respect. Such men do not *deserve* a woman's respect, but Peter is not calling on wives to *feel* respect; he is commanding them to *show* respectful behavior. This is not about the husband deserving respect; it is about the wife being willing to treat her husband respectfully *without conditions*.

APPLICATION:



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**HOW do husbands love
unconditionally?**





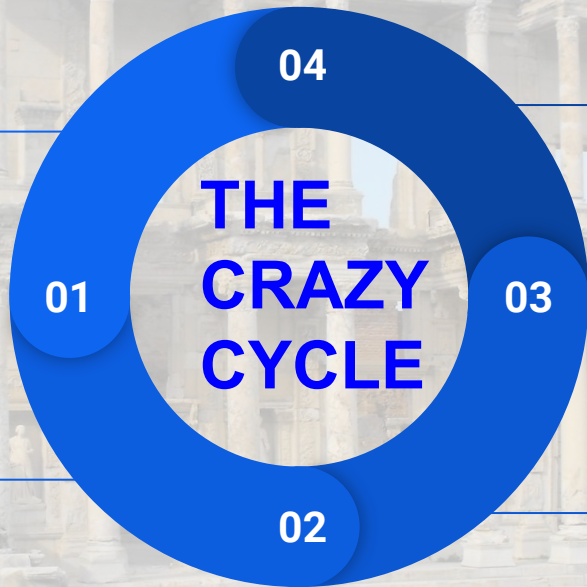
APPLICATION:

**HOW do husbands love
unconditionally?**

**HOW do wives show
unconditional respect?**

**WITHOUT
LOVE**

**SHE
REACTS**



**HE
REACTS**

**WITHOUT
RESPECT**

Ephesians 5:18-21

“Being filled with the Spirit...
Submitting to one another”

1 Jn 4:8,16,17

Christ *living His life through*
the believer.