

"A Godly Husband" - 1 Peter 3:7

I suppose some would say that I was a bit cowardly in preaching about wives submitting to their husbands two weeks ago. Cowardly because I left town right after the service. But really, it's just the way things worked out. I believe in expository preaching ... letting God's word speak to us. So as the priests do in Nehemiah 8:8, I read distinctly from the word, I give the sense, I explain the meaning, and I trust the Holy Spirit to apply it to your lives. It's why I choose to preach through entire sections of scripture, through entire books of the Bible verse by verse. I absolutely believe this Book is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. This Book makes us complete and fully equipped for every good work so I dare not shy away from what this Book says, even if we arrive at something to which our modern culture is hostile. Especially if we arrive at something to which our modern culture is hostile. Whenever you read from this book, you can preface it with the words "Thus saith the Lord."

Thus saith the Lord: "Wives be submissive to your husbands."

But don't worry ladies, this week I'm picking on the guys. Don't go to sleep, though, there is plenty here for everyone.

You know, one quote from our conference keeps coming back to me: "Show me a man who is not afraid of his wife and I'll show you a man who will lie about other things." We can chuckle about it, but there is some serious truth buried there. I don't mean that guys are afraid that their wives are going to beat them up, although I suppose there are some that do. But so often, we men are afraid that we're not going to measure up to our wives' expectations. Fear is something guys struggle with. We try to hide it, but we do struggle with fear. Fear can actually be quite motivating for us, but it can also be paralyzing.

So often, we're afraid that we are simply not up to the task. We fear failure. We're afraid we're going to fail at work. We're afraid we're going to fail our wives. We're afraid we're going to fail our kids.

I remember holding my newborn daughter ... looking at that tiny face ... completely dependent on me. I knew I was responsible for protecting her, for providing for her, for teaching her. I remember thinking, almost in a panic, "I don't think I can do this. I'm incapable of doing this. What if I fail her?"

Honestly, guys, have you ever had that feeling? At some level, I'll bet you do. I have that feeling every Sunday morning as the offering is being taken and I'm praying about the sermon I'm called to deliver.

We men fear failure. And guys, if you have ever asked yourself "What if I'm not up to the task?" The answer is, you're not. If you try to be a godly husband, a godly father, a godly man by your own effort, you can't do it. You can't truly succeed as a husband. You can't truly succeed as a father. You can't truly succeed at anything ... by yourself.

It's why God gave you Jesus Christ. It's why God gave you the Holy Spirit. It's why God gave you your wife. It's why God gave you an instruction manual, so let's see what it says now.

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

That second word is really important: “Likewise”. It means similarly so, or in the same manner and what it refers to is the Christian concept of mutual submission. We make a big deal about the necessity of the wife submitting to her husband. It’s what the Bible says, and so often, in our culture, the idea is viewed negatively. But as Ephesians 5:21 says, we are to be ...

... submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Ephesians 5:21)

The Christian lifestyle is a lifestyle of submission.

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

While the world demands that we become strong so we can dominate others, the Bible demands that we submit to God’s strength so we can serve others. Our strength is found in the Lord, and believe me, he is way stronger than you could ever be. I don’t care how much time you spend in the gym!

So we are to submit to one another. Husbands, likewise ... you are to serve your wife. But you are to serve her in a different way in which she is to serve you. And here in this one verse, we see three ways in which you are to do so.

1. Strive to understand her.
2. Render honor to her.
3. Understand that she shares the same kingdom inheritance.

And just to make sure that we get the importance of this, God offers a warning: “So your prayers will not be hindered.” Do you want God to answer your prayers? Well then, you’d better pay attention.

So the first charge to husbands is that you live with them with understanding. Now literally, this phrase in the Greek means “live together according to knowledge”. There are some things we need to acknowledge about our wives, and sometimes these things might conflict with our prevalent culture. But men, we are called to understand these things. That, my friends, is no small task. Women are wired differently than guys are. I know is not politically correct in today’s culture, but it is a fact.

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

There is a distinction; we are not identical clones and so, when presented with a certain scenario, or with a certain stimulus, men and women are likely to react differently. Guys, it is your duty to recognize this. It is your duty to do everything you can to see things from her perspective and to understand where she is coming from. It is your duty to be considerate of her.

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**. (Genesis 2:24)*

Joined. One flesh. As man and wife, we complement one another to become a single functional unit.

By the way, this is one of the ways God reveals Himself to us. God is One. He is a unit, but the one God is eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. vEach

person of the godhead is fully God, essentially the same, but each person of the godhead is functionally distinct. They have different roles. In salvation, for example, the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit brings one to spiritual life. God the Son submits to the will of God the Father.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 6:38)

God the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-14)

And God the Father gives honor and glory to the Son:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

Essentially the same, but functionally distinct. This image of the triune God is revealed in the marriage relationship. Men, you are called to understand this, to honor it and you are called to be compassionate to your bride. Live with them in an understanding way.

Secondly, husbands are to render honor to their wives. In other words, you are to treat your wife with the utmost respect. Render honor to her just as God the Father renders honor to God the Son. Don't denigrate her in front of others. I just cringe when I hear a guy refer to his wife in an uncomplimentary way. You know, maybe as "the old lady". Don't ever do that! Build her up; extol her virtues before your friends. You are to render honor to her.

In Ephesians, Chapter 5, Paul tells us that husbands need to love their wives as Christ loves the Church. There is no higher standard than that.

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. **So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.** (Ephesians 5:25-28)*

Your wife needs to know she is loved. It's not enough just to tell her that on your wedding day. You need to keep affirming that fact. Not just with words; you need to show her that she is loved. Show her in ways that clearly speak to her.

And this is *agape*' love, by the way. The command is to render unconditional love, the kind of love that drove Jesus to the cross for you. It is not dependent on circumstance. You render this love because it is needed even if it is not deserved. And if I might circle back, you demonstrate this love by understanding her.

One of the things you must understand is that your wife is the weaker vessel. Oh boy, this one can be a cultural land mine! Our culture does not want to acknowledge this. "Women can and should do everything a man can do," is the battle cry. Well then, why do we have girl's athletics? Why don't we just have one basketball team in our high school?

Just asking.

Now I want to make one thing perfectly clear: This is not saying women are intellectually inferior. It is not saying women are morally inferior. It is not saying women have less spiritual strength. This is talking about physical strength period.

Now, I know, there are a lot of women in the world who could absolutely kick my tail in all sorts of physical activities, so this is a generalization. In general, considering the whole population, men are physically stronger than women and the vast majority of husbands are physically stronger than their wives. So guys, you need to recognize this. There is no excuse whatsoever for a man to be physically abusive to his wife. I'll just leave it at that.

Men, understand your wife's perspective and honor her. Honor her because you are equal partners in the kingdom of God. Render honor *as being heirs together of the grace of life*.

Paul writes to the Galatians:

*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is **neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:27-29)*

There is a conditional statement embedded in that passage ... *if you are Christ's*. Do you belong to Christ? If you don't, then this message is not for you.

You see, there are only two kinds of people in God's economy. There are the saints and there are the ain'ts.

The ain'ts are on the superhighway that leads to hell. If you have not submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, that's you. If you have not confessed the fact that you are a sinner and asked for forgiveness, that is you. If you have not called on the name of Jesus, you are doomed because there is no other name in heaven and earth by which we might be saved.

If you're an ain't, you need to become a saint. Jesus has already done the work for you. He died on the cross to pay the death penalty for your cosmic treason. All you have to do is accept it by faith.

"This is the work of God, (says Jesus) that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:29)

... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." (Romans 10:9-13)

If you're an ain't, close your eyes right now and ask Jesus to become your Lord. Pray "Lord, I acknowledge that I'm a sinner. Please forgive my sins. I believe that you died for me and were raised from the dead. I want you to take over my life. I believe; please help my unbelief."

If you pray it and mean it, then you have become a saint. It doesn't matter if you are male or female, married or single, you are heirs together of the grace of life.

So now guys, back to you. Don't shirk your responsibility as a husband, as a father. Return to the cross; return to Christ. You are called to provide spiritual leadership in your family. Don't leave the "religious stuff" to your wife. (I heard that this week.) As a man, you need to get into this Word of God so you understand what Jesus wants you to do.

He wants you to be compassionate and understanding with the women in your life. He wants you to render honor to your wives. He wants you to understand that you are equal in the economy of heaven, heirs together of the grace of life.

If you will be obedient to this instruction book, your prayers will not be hindered and you will be a godly husband.