

Husbands Be Considerate

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7 (ESV))

Here again is this very special word that is so filled with an abundance of meaning, the word “likewise”. And just as was said in an earlier message regarding the responses and behaviors of our dear wives, so also, for the husbands, this word “likewise” is directing our thoughts back to instructions given just a few verses earlier, especially in chapter 2. There, God gave us resolute instructions and exhortations regarding the matter of submission to authority, saying that aside from a few and rare exceptional times and circumstances, our usual, our common, our only “acceptable” manner of conduct and behavior towards authority is humble obedience.

But here, the authority is the ultimate authority, God Himself, towards whom there is to be no exception in our obedience. And He is instructing and exhorting us with the words,

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7 (ESV))

Within most all the ordinary circumstances of life, we all live under varying layers of authority, our employers, our government and others. But here, in the marriage relationship, the husband comes first and directly under the authority of Christ. Those words in 1 Corinthians 11,

³ . . . I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.
(1 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB))

Words clearly and plainly given! And listen also to the words of Colossians 3:23-24 . . .

²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV))

Again, in all the matters and circumstances of daily life, we are under authority and we must conduct those matters knowing that although our interaction most always will be with people, it truly is the “Lord Christ” whom we ultimately are serving and to whom we are accountable. And here in the words of our scripture text for today,

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7 (ESV))

As husbands, our obedience to this command from the Lord, though it be carried out in our behaviors and responses towards our wives, in reality is directly to Christ Himself. The honor, the respect and the obedience we show is ultimately toward God.

And no, this is not a concept that is easy to grasp, to remember and to carry out, especially within the fast-moving circumstances of our day. But regardless of whether or not you and I fully comprehend this concept as we should, we are still fully accountable for every attitude and every response that takes place. And listen! There will surely be consequences for our every attitude and behavior, both very good consequences, and also very bad ones.

Look carefully again! In this passage is a very simple instruction from God to us husbands. Here, we are told,

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7 (ESV))

As we study this passage, may I confide that these particular words have been ever so special and precious to me over the past many years. There was a point in time when God led me to adopt several verses of scripture that I would recite to myself each day, verses that would guide my heart and my mind regarding most every part of my daily life and responsibilities, my relationship with God, my relationship with my wife, my relationship with my children and my responsibilities toward other people, my employer, the government, and others.

The verses that I committed to memory regarding my relationship with my blessed wife were some precious words from the Book of Ephesians chapter 5, and then also these words here from 1st Peter 3. . . .

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

and then these words from 1st Peter 3, given in a slightly different translation . . .

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

Reciting these verses almost daily, sometimes even more than once daily, has helped to guide my thoughts and attitudes and behaviors toward my wife for many, many years now.

And that is exactly what God intended these words to do, to be an ever-continuing, moment by moment, reminder for me to always be considerate of my beloved wife and of her needs and desires, no matter how fast-paced or all-consuming the activities of my own day would become.

Folks, it is of little value to us to just know and recite scripture verses if we are not fully committed to actually following through and carrying them out. These words must actually be “worked out” within the fast-paced moments of our daily life, else the grace and the blessings of God will not be able to flow to us and through us. I’m reminded of the words of Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13,

¹² . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV))

As you know, our salvation and the evidence of it that is shown in the fruits that we bear each day, does not just magically flow into us from God’s unending reservoir of grace. It does, but it also requires you and me to step forward and do our part. Listen again carefully to these words!

¹² . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV))

Yes, our initial salvation, that part that saves our soul and assures us of eternal life in heaven is all accomplished by the shed blood of Christ on the cross. But according to these words and others like them, there is another part of salvation that you and I must participate within each and every moment of daily life, and it is this, our “working it out”!

¹² . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV))

Simply put, we have work to do, every day, and we must faithfully get about doing it, with fear and trembling, and with God working within us every moment to enable our

part to be effectual, a perfect combination, us working out our salvation and God working within us to make it really take place rightly. In other words, as I mentioned a moment ago, it is not enough that we say and memorize and know these precious words of scripture. We also must actually “work them out” in all the practical matters of each day’s circumstances.

In an interview with a bible scholar that I listened to recently, he was explaining how there is often a very crucial divide, a “disconnect” between the theology that we say we believe and our ethical “carrying out” of that theology. He said that we can read and study and commit to memory all sorts of really powerful scriptural truths. But if that theology is not worked out in an ethical manner within the practical matters of our daily circumstances, it is useless to us and also useless to God.

And no where else is that truth more obvious than it is in the intimate, “behind closed doors” relationships between husbands and wives, their attitudes and their behaviors as they live and interact with each other daily. The home and family are the ultimate “testing grounds” for each of us in our Christian lives. And that is where we had better make it all happen right, else it will not happen at all!

¹² . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV))

And this is what God is commanding us husbands to do with these very special words of our text.

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

The question for us husbands, and may I include “potential husbands to be”, is how “considerate” are we willing to be toward our wives. And I don’t mean just in those “big matters” of daily life, but also in every moment of daily life, big and small matters alike, “every moment” of them.

And no, we husbands don’t get to separate out the things of our life and the things of her life, demanding to “have our space”. Once you are married, you cannot ever separate out “yours” from “hers”. “One” is an indivisible number, and you are “one”, absolutely and completely in every moment of life, in every way and in every activity of it, “absolutely one”. And because you are “one”, your “consideration” of her must be on the same level as would be your consideration of yourself. If you hurt, she hurts. If she hurts, you hurt. When you buy something for yourself, you are buying it for her. What

does she think about that purchase? Does she want that thing? Can she use it? Is it the color she enjoys? If you go out to dinner, does she like that kind of food? If the house is warm to you, is it warm to her? It might be cold! “Husband, be considerate as you live with your wife!”

Your home may be a very “Christian home”, in most ways behaving and enjoying many of the attributes of what most everyone would observe to be a Christian home and Christian relationship. But again, as I mentioned a moment ago regarding the biblical truths of theology, there is too often a “disconnect” between our theology and our ethical handling of those biblical truths.

The theology here is simple. It tells us husbands plainly and simply that we are to be “considerate” as we interact each moment with our wives, or as this text words it, we are to live with our wives in an understanding way. We are not to just “tolerate” or “put up with” our wife’s ideas and opinions and philosophies. We are to embrace them, to have and to show real and actual “respect” towards her in every one of them.

Brothers in Christ, this is a command from God. It is not a suggestion! It is a command! And it is a guideline with very strictly defined borders, borders that if violated will exact specific consequences from God.

Do my words sound “legalistic” to you? Some might think so! But legalistic or not, it says these words in a plain and simple manner, telling us that we must “be considerate” of our wives, we must live with them in an “understanding way” and we must “treat them with respect”, else we cannot expect our prayers to be answered. Our ethical handling of this theology regarding the treatment of our wives will determine whether our prayers will be answered or if they will be hindered. That is the pure and simple truth that is given here.

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

And note here carefully that God very graciously reveals a reason why we ought always to be considerate of our wives, respecting them and their needs. It is because in some ways our wives have weaknesses that we husbands need to always take into consideration.

I confess to you that I don’t fully understand this matter about the weakness spoken about here. And most likely, there are many, many wives who read these words and object to them.

But regardless of our lack of understanding and regardless of the objections, these words are plainly and simply given.

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner . . . (1 Peter 3:7)

Here in these words, God clearly reveals that our wives have certain weaknesses. Perhaps it is that all wives have some weaknesses that are common to all of them, and then some other weaknesses that are specific to each of them. But be that as it may, our response as husbands is to intentionally become aware of those weaknesses and to “preemptively” respond to them.

When I consider these words, I most often think back to the first revealed weakness within the heart and mind of a wife, that which took place in the Garden of Eden with dear Eve. These scriptures tell us that Eve was “beguiled”. My thesaurus tells me that to be “beguiled” is to be “lured”, “charmed”, “captivated”, “mesmerized”. Could this be one of those weaknesses within the hearts of our wives, that they are more susceptible to being “beguiled”.

The indication from these scriptures is that Adam was not “beguiled”, but rather, he was fully aware of the lies being put forth by satan. And for that reason, Adam was held far more accountable for his sin.

I don’t know if this susceptibility to beguilement is one of the weaknesses of our wives or not, but I do know the accountability and the responsibility that rests upon us husbands. We are ever and always to be prepared to step forward and to get in-between our wives and the potential threats they might encounter. And in keeping with the command from Ephesians 5 that we are to “love” and “give ourselves” for our wives, just as Christ did, we are to be prepared to even give our lives to protect them.

So then, husbands, take some time to get alone with yourself and alone with the Lord, specifically for the purpose of asking yourself and the Lord some very difficult and demanding questions about this matter! Are you “considerate” as you live with your wife. Do you “live with her in an understanding way”? Do you have “real respect” for your wife, for her thoughts and her attitudes and her opinions?

And again, as I asked a few moments ago, are you “one” with your wife, truly “one”? If she hurts, do you hurt. Are you aware of when she needs to be hugged? Perhaps she needs to be hugged often, even when she doesn’t show that need or even know herself that she needs a hug.

When you buy something for yourself, are you buying it for her also. What does she think about that purchase? Does she want that thing? Can she use it? Is it the color she enjoys? If you go out to dinner, does she like that kind of food? If the house is warm to you, is it warm to her? It might be cold!

The command in these words is for us husbands to love our wives as Christ loves each of us, and for us to step out forward and to intentionally be considerate of our wives at every moment of every day in every activity of life, be they big or small. Husbands, are you doing that?

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)