

1 Peter 3:7

1Pe 3:7 (NKJV) 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.

If there was ever a verse that was needed for the day and age in which we live, this would certainly and emphatically be one of them. As much time as we have spent over the last eight weeks teaching on [1 Peter 3:1-6](#), this verse should demand as much attention as those previous six verses. However, as we go through this verse, we also want to include [Ephesians 5:25-29](#) as part of the discussion. It says the following,

Eph 5:25 (NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church.

There may not be a more important task for the modern church than that of helping to develop godly husbands who not only have a passionate love for their wives, but who also have a deep love for their children. We have already established the amazing impact that a godly wife has on the family, and the same should be equally true of a godly husband. Without sounding overly critical, there probably is an immense shortage of godly husbands both in our country, as well as within many local churches. The very unfortunate problem with ungodly fathers is that they generally raise ungodly children. I am sure that we all know of professing Christian husbands who, for whatever reason, struggle to provide meaningful spiritual leadership and direction in their home. I personally know a couple who has several children, claim to be Christians, but never enter the doors of a church, and never provide any kind of meaningful spiritual instruction in the home setting. All they have done is to purchase Christian plaques to place on their living room wall. Maybe I am missing something, but I simply do not believe that is going to get it done. Being a godly father involves ensuring that their children are gaining a strong, biblical foundation – both in the home and in a church setting. Statistics generally confirm that once children reach a certain age, there oftentimes is very little impact that we as parents will have on them. One of the worst things that I can imagine is to arrive in heaven, but my children not make it. Everything else in life seems somewhat miniscule and unimportant relative to that one reality.

To make things worse, **the whole idea of marriage has been redefined** with the influx of both homosexual and lesbian marriages, abortion on demand, and an increasing transgender population. Then, just to add fuel to the dilemma, people are much more inclined to “test the waters sexually” before actually getting married. So, in that process we have Christians referring to their “significant other” or their “intimate partner” which are simply cultural words that people think help reduce the impact of biblical words like “**adultery**” and “**fornication**”. We have couples developing pre-nuptial agreements that are simply a provision to make the potential for divorce go smoother. Then to make the whole picture even worse, we live in a culture that has become increasingly comfortable with “fatherless children”. It really has become an epidemic, a toxic scourge, and a kind of cultural plague in our country.

43% of the children being raised in America live without their birth father, 71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father in the home, 63% of youth suicides come from fatherless homes. The statistics are so numerous that they become both boring and numbing at the same time.

So, where do we start? Well, first **we start by acknowledging that we have sinned against a holy God**. We allow our children to watch filth on television and give them open access to the Internet that is filled with pornography that a 5 year old can find. I am not sure how deeply most Christians may feel about personal repentance and remorse in this area, but without it I am confident that we will never make any meaningful progress in addressing the issues that surround us. We live in a church age that is addicted not to its God, but to its personal conveniences, lifestyles, and priorities. The church is amazingly adept at redefining biblical words so that they are perceived as acceptable cultural words. The problem that most local churches have is that they lack both the discernment and the will to try and recover what they are quickly losing. I am convinced that if you were to ask the average young person in an American Baptist church whether or not they really wanted to be in church that the honest ones would tell you “no”.

You have heard it said many times, but we are always just one generation away from a complete denial of the Christian faith. Hedonism, which can be defined as pleasure seeking, self-gratification, self-indulgence, and moral decadence, is utterly rampant in America with no end in sight for its demise. Between 100-200 churches in America close their doors every week. I have a great friend who pastors a church that only meets on Sunday morning – and they wonder why their church is dying. If a pastor preaches too much on things like commitment and church attendance, they will be characterized as being overbearing, lording over the people, and insensitive. I was having a conversation the other day with another pastor and he said after listening to me for a while that I was a kind of spiritual “dinosaur” – which was actually his way of complementing me for not succumbing to the ever changing standards of the emergent church. If you were to follow closely what is happening in the evangelical realm, churches that have softened the teaching of the Word and provided creative entertainment and novelty as its primary magnet are growing, and churches that truly teach and preach the Word of God are declining. Why is that? Would not you think that it should be the very opposite? The reason is because people want a soft gospel, a non-demanding message, and a convenient and entertaining spiritual experience that does not interfere with their lifestyle and priorities. Somewhere in the big picture, a measure of repentance seems only reasonable.

Secondly, if we really want to strengthen our families, **we must do everything we can to understand God’s standards for marriage** – both for the husband and for the wife. Make no mistake about it, but God has non-negotiable standards for a marriage and for the family, and the more that people violate those standards, the greater will be the negative impact on the family. In a pluralistic culture that does not like or approve of absolutes, God’s Word is not seen as a friend, but as an enemy to someone’s life and personal happiness. However, in reality, it is the only thing that can and will give life and create life. I love what Jesus said in [John 6:63](#),

Jn 6:63 (NKJV) It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

They both are life and they give life.

The question then is where do we start, where do we begin? Well, it is my personal opinion only that we have to start with the husband and the father. I fully realize that [1 Peter 3:7](#) is not a passage on being a father, but within the family setting that role cannot be minimized. The father has to have the strength, the wisdom, the discernment, and the courage to do what is best for his entire family, not just his wife. However, we are going to exegetically stick to the text and only address his role as a husband, but if we want to actually see the importance and immediate relevance of this passage, we have to know that the culture is working against us every single day. We cannot dismiss the cultural environment in which we live as being irrelevant to this discussion. Its impact is threatening and challenging the very fabric of what the family is with the traditional biblical roles, and the longer it exists, the greater will be the impact.

So, what does [1 Peter 3:7](#) tell us? Well, the first word that I want us to see is the word “**likewise**”. This is such an important introduction into this passage that it simply cannot be overlooked. I am often shocked at how little attention that some of the commentaries and many Bible teachers actually give to these seemingly unimportant words. To the contrary, these are the words that connect the dots, that tie Scriptures together, that thrust a passage in a particular direction. At a teaching level, I have always been fascinated with the small words - with the conjunctions, with the prepositions. Many pastors do not consider them to be “spiritual meat”, so they virtually ignore them and give them no meaningful substance at all. In my mind, that is a complete travesty of their hermeneutical responsibility.

In v7, this particular word “**likewise**” refers back to v1-6 which also begins with the words “**Wives, likewise...**” Then, that use of “**likewise**” in v1 refers back to [1 Peter 2:21-25](#) and the description of how Christ “**committed Himself to Him who judges righteously**”. These two words “**likewise**” are literally driving us back to Christ, pushing us back to Christ, and bringing us back to Christ. We cannot ignore this. Why is that? It is because Christ is the ultimate role model and example of genuine submission. If you ever want to know exactly what God the Father expects of your life personally, then you must allow Him to drive you to Christ, and that is exactly what this word does. The word “**likewise**” is the Greek word “*homoios*” and simply means in the same manner, of equal degree denoting perfect agreement.¹ For instance, Jesus said the following in [John 5:19](#),

Jn 5:19 (NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

The Greek word “*homoios*” is only used 31 times in the New Testament, 20 times in the gospels and 11 times in the epistles. So, overall it is not a word that is used that often. Peter uses the word three times which is as much as any epistle in the New Testament. It is used twice in [1 Corinthians 7:3-4](#), and both of those verses are speaking about the husband / wife relationship.

1Co 7:3 (NKJV) Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Certainly these two verses highlight the idea of a mutual submission to one another without a demanding perspective. Both partners are to provide a high level of mutual respect to one another. The husband

¹ Zodhiates, 1045.

cannot treat his wife like she is his student and he has to teach her everything. The wife cannot treat her husband like he is her student and always correcting him for every little thing that he does not do like she does. Marriage partners are to treat one another exactly how they would like to be treated. Husbands, if you do not want your wife barking at you, then do not bark at her. The word for “**affection**” (NKJV) in the Greek Interlinear is actually the word “**debt**”, and it is translated in so many different ways that it is hard to grasp its actual meaning. For instance, it is translated as “**affection** (NKJV), **due benevolence** (KJV), **duty** (NASB), **conjugal rights** (ESV, AMP, RSV), **marital duty** (NIV), **marital responsibility** (HCSB), **due** (ASV), **obligation** (ISV), and **sexual needs** (NLT)”. So, the technical definition of the word is that of a debt that we owe to someone. Think of it this way. We each have a marital obligation to our marriage partner and they have the same exact obligation to us. There is no distinction here. There is no role dominance here – none. This is complete and utter mutual respect for one another in every area of the marriage – intellectual, relational, emotional, and sexual. So, if we reflect back on the reference of the two “**likewise**” statements in v1 and v7, what we should glean from their reference is that whatever the Father would do, that is what Christ would do ([John 5:19](#)). It would be in the same manner and in perfect agreement with what the Father would do. It would be “**likewise**”, “in the same manner, exactly alike.

We need to appreciate that the word “**likewise**” has two technical aspects to it that are important to understand. First, as it is used in [1 Peter 3](#) (both times), it is used as what is grammatically known as a “connective”, or a word that connects two differing or multiple passages. It is used to connect the thought of one passage with the ideas and thoughts of a previous passage. That is exactly why as we studied through v1-6 that I kept saying that whatever was required of the wife was just as applicable to the husband. It is the word “**likewise**” that exegetically demands that interpretation. In the same way that the wife was to submit herself to her heavenly Father’s will for her life, the husband is to do exactly the same. There is no difference in principle or outworking. The discipline of developing godliness and submission in our lives applies to both the husband and the wife in exactly the same way. If the wife is to be submissive to her husband, the husband is to be submissive to his head which is Christ,, and that is why we have taught all along that the husband’s responsibilities are actually greater.

Secondly, the word “**likewise**” is called an “*adverb of manner*”. This grammatical element identifies the tone, the attitude, and the character in which a particular action is to be carried out and performed. However, there is also what is known as an “*adverb of means*” which may sound exactly the same, but in the Greek language it is not the same. The adverb of manner pertains much more to the tone of the verb, whereas the adverb of means refers to the actual way that an action occurs, or, in our case, the practical outworking of a godly attitude in the person’s life.² I.e., how does a husband actually demonstrate his love to his wife or how does the wife actually demonstrate her love for her husband? In either case, whatever they may do is actually negated if it is not reinforced with a godly tone, with a godly attitude. Once a godly attitude toward your partner is lost or abandoned, everything else simply becomes mechanical and emotionless and will not contribute anything positive to the marriage – nothing, not one good thing. From my perspective, it will actually be a catalyst in destroying the very spirit of a marriage. Attitude always creates direction. Outlook always determines outcome.

² Wallace, *adverb of manner*, ep.

So, what this little connecting word “**likewise**” is telling us is that the demand for obedience in this area of a husband’s or wife’s life is one that must have the right attitude associated with it. Being obedient to God’s principles and commands with the right attitude is just as important as to how that attitude is worked out practically in the husband’s or wife’s life. You may have seen this in your workplace where oftentimes employees are begrudgingly submissive to their superiors, but they really do not want to be. Well, the same scenario can easily play itself out in the marriage setting with a wife becoming begrudgingly submissive, almost resentfully submissive. For instance, if a husband begins to demand submission from his wife and threatens her with “*you need to be submissive to me because the Bible says so*”, all he will get is a begrudging submission. The husband has to earn his wife’s respect and reverence. He has to be the role model for her to emulate. In reality, I personally see nothing in Scripture where a husband should ever be demanding of his wife in any way. A husband cannot take a verse that says “**Husbands love your wife like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her**” and successfully incorporate the idea that he can be demanding of his wife from that passage. Hermeneutically, one Scripture cannot violate the spirit of a parallel passage.

So, from the husband’s perspective, he not only has the example of Christ to contend with, but he also has the godly admonition that God gives to the wife. If Christ did not revile, then “**likewise**” he cannot revile. If Christ did not threaten, then “**likewise**” he cannot threaten. If the wife is to willingly and graciously yield herself to her husband, then “**likewise**” the husband is to willingly and graciously yield himself to his wife. If the wife is to have moral conduct accompanied by reverence, then “**likewise**” the husband is to be moral in his behavior. If the wife is to develop a “**gentle and quiet spirit**”, the husband is “**likewise**” to be gentle and peaceful as well.

So, what do we want to take away from the message today? What should we see as being important and vital for our personal lives, our marriages, and our families?

- (1) Well, first of all, we need to appreciate that culturally and socially that the whole idea of marriage is being redefined at an alarming rate. It may not be being redefined for us personally, but it is being redefined for our children.
- (2) Secondly, we have to take both personal and corporate responsibility for these kinds of sins, and we start by acknowledging that we have sinned against a holy God. Repentance is the door way into God’s blessings and His revival of our lives.
- (3) Thirdly, we must do everything we can to understand God’s standards for marriage. They are much more demanding on our lives and are our only protection from the rampant decay of marriage in America.
- (4) Fourthly, Christ is our model for submission and nothing less. Whatever the Father did, however the Father would have responded, that is exactly what Christ did, and He is our example. We have to let God’s Word keep driving us back to Christ. He is our only hope.
- (5) Lastly, we must develop the right attitude towards God’s standards for marriage. Outlook always determines outcome, so we need to ensure that our heart is bent on God’s standards for our home.

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