

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.

Before we continue the exposition of [1 Peter 3:7](#), I want to take an entire study and address what I call a “perception” issue. Perception is how we see things, how we view life. Everyone views life a certain way. Someone’s perception of things generally has a greater influence in their life than does reality. How we perceive our relationship to the Word of God will have an incredible bearing on our attention to what it says. Some people read the Bible like they read a newspaper – just scanning through the paper to find what is of interest to them. However, as Christians we cannot read the Bible in that manner. The Bible is not a normal book written by a normal author – not at all. To the contrary, the Bible contains the very words of God Himself, and embedded within those words is what I reference to as my life code, my life program, my life protocol. No matter how I may think that I can live, the Scriptures reveal to me how I should live and how I should think. So, if I take the Word of God lightly, if I just carelessly brush aside its wisdom and its commands and its demands on my life, then I will completely miss any and all benefit that it has for my life. For instance, when we come to a verse like [Ephesians 5:25](#) that tells a husband to “**love his wife like Christ loved the church**”, how far can I as a husband go in ignoring that spiritual direction for my marriage? How much freedom and liberty do I think that am I willing to take with a verse like this? What would ever make me think that somehow this does not really apply to me personally as a husband, but is just a kind of “pie in the sky” command? If the truth were really known, I think that would be more of the normal mentality than the abnormal. “*Hey, we’re married, so let’s get on with life.*” This command in [1 Peter 3:7](#) to live with our wife with understanding and to give her great honor is NOT something that a believing husband can just casually ignore. The idea of loving his wife like Christ loved the church is not a suggestion, not some kind of option for his life. It is to be his life, to be where his heart is, to be what he does and how he lives – loving his wife like Christ loved the church.

Everyone views the Word of God through what I call their “theological grid”. This grid could be likened to the lens in a pair of glasses in that everything someone sees, understands, and believes is seen through their theological grid. This is a very real “**life lens**” that each person has. This grid through which they see life and understand life has been developed through all of their experiences. It would include everything about their life - their childhood, their parents, the schools they attended, their friends, the country in which they live, the kind of church they attended (or if they even attended a church), their culture, their teachers, good experiences, bad experiences, the books they read, the choices they made, their personal skills – anything and everything. So, we not only see life a certain way, but more importantly we also we see the Bible a certain way. We see truth through this lens, through this theological grid, and if our grid has become distorted and skewed, then not only how we see something, but how we approach something becomes greatly corrupted and polluted. To make it worse, we live in a culture that is filled with amazing technology and instruments of communication that allow people to have open access to every kind of variant information and options possible. It is readily accessible and readily available for anyone to use. The technology is constantly changing our cultural and intellectual grid.

The problem is that we have many Christians who have developed the perception that they do not have to take the Scriptures seriously, that they can just pick and choose what they deem to be important for their life. If they do not like what the Bible says about something, then they believe that they can simply ignore that part of Scripture and as long as they retain some level of resemblance to nominal Christianity, then everything will be perfectly okay. Actually, nothing could be any further from the truth. If for some wild stretch of the imagination we had the ability to go back and repair all of the damage that we have created through our bad decisions and unbiblical assumptions, then having the wrong perception about life may be okay because it could be easily corrected. Unfortunately, that is not a viable biblical option – not at all. I have said it often, but everyone is simply a by-product of their decisions, and those decisions are greatly impacted by their perception of how deeply they need to obey the Word of God. The truth of the matter is that an individual reaps what they sow, and even if they are able to go back and make some nominal repairs to their mistakes, that process generally takes years, maybe even decades.

Just think of the man who is an alcoholic or an habitual drug user. His perception was always that he would not become an alcoholic or a drug addict and that his drinking and drug use would not impact his family or his life. However, here he is at the end of his life, and his life has been one bad decision after another, and everyone crossing his path has suffered. His perception was flawed, his theological grid was flawed, his understanding was completely corrupted. In the same way, think of the nominal husband or wife who have taken Scriptures like we are studying and have not given them much thought and not taken them seriously. They have read them, they think they know what these verses mean, but for whatever reason, they have never given much attention to these commands and divine truths. The result is that their marriages are just mediocre at best and most likely have no real hope of even recovering from the years and years of marital neglect towards their partner. They may have done their part in the family picture, but they never really advanced these remarkable truths in their life and in their marriage and today they are constantly struggling with intimacy, oneness, and even a deep heart felt love for one another. Many couples are looking for reasons to get out of the marriage, not stay in it.

Now, what I want to do is to try and provide some definition to your theological grid, to your personal grid, to your life grid, and then challenge both husbands and wives to reflect on their perception of how verses like these we are addressing should actually be impacting their life. My very biased perception is that the average husband or wife think that all of this is either too lofty for the effort required to achieve it or they think that it is really somewhat irrelevant for their life, especially if they have been married for some period of time and have children. However, this portion of Scripture is as important to our personal lives and to our families as any portion of Scripture that we can study. This biblical study and the biblical presentation of these vital truths for your life and for your family will do you no good if in reality you never really hear what God says in these verses. You may have a kind of casual take it or leave it attitude towards them and probably see no meaningful room for improvement in your life. You may already have reached that place in your marriage where you are completely satisfied with where your marriage is and with the intimacy you share with your partner. That is your perception, but in reality this idea of learning to love your wife or learning to love your husband is a lifetime process. Life has a series of never ending stages to it from childhood to adulthood to the last days of your life, and every stage is different and has its own unique issues. Each stage is demanding on the marriage and uniquely different

from the previous stage. You have no children, you have children, the children leave, you have grandchildren – every stage is different and has its own set of problems. You were young and vital, you were middle aged and mature, and you became old and mentally and physically restricted. Everything in life and in marriage is constantly changing.

What I want to do is to try and provide some theological grid rules to challenge you to mature and strengthen your perception of your marriage partner. Hopefully this minimal discussion will help you see where your way of seeing your marriage may be flawed and where you may need to make some adjustments. Remember that perception is greater than reality. An atheist may say that he does not believe in God and live his life accordingly, but his perception of life has nothing whatsoever to do with the reality that one day he will face the living God and give an account of his life. He will not like the results. If your perception is that the Scriptures are irrelevant to your life and that you do not have to address them, then that perception will govern and control your life and in the end will produce consequences that you will not like. It is important for each of us to understand that we are not smarter than God, and everytime that we challenge God and His standards that we lose something valuable and meaningful for our life.