

## 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.**

Once again, I have to qualify this morning that this is not a normal type Bible study. What we are doing is much more motivational in nature relative to the husband / wife relationship. In the study last week we looked at what we called a “perception issue”. A perception is how we see things, how we view life, and that perception generally has a greater impact on our life than does reality. How someone perceives something will impact everything about their life. It will impact their goals, their communication, their resources, their priorities – everything about their life. We are governed and controlled by our perception of life and especially our perception of the Word of God. So, how we view a verse and a passage like the one we are studying, our perception of this verse, will actually govern whether or not we as a husband will give it any attention at all – whether we will even notice what it really says.. It is an almost effortless motion for Christians to read the Bible with utterly no intention of trying to understand what it says and certainly not obeying what it says. I know this is a somewhat arrogant assessment on my part, but I am convinced that something like church and the teaching of the Word has very little impact on the average, nominal Christian in today’s culture. We are more than satisfied with a high level of spiritual ignorance, and ultimately a high level of spiritual indifference.

To help in this area, what is important to understand as we look at one verse or a passage in the Scriptures is to see how the author actually communicates. In some cases, all the author is doing is passing on information. In hermeneutics, this is called “referential language”. I.e., what the author is doing is simply describing something, so the content is very non-emotional. Very rarely is anyone ever moved by this kind of communication style. For instance, a science book or a textbook on Advanced Calculus would fall into this category of communication. It is a very non-emotional description of information that only cares about reaching the mind. The second major level of communication is what is called “commissive language”, and it is very different from the first. Its main goal is to evoke emotion, to provoke the reader to make good decisions, to arouse feelings, to arouse sentiment, and to affect change in some way. People in love talk this way, football coaches talk this way before a game, generals leading their men into battle talk this way. This is a language that is aimed at the heart, aimed at the emotions. We read an automobile manual much different than we read a love letter. Both use completely different kinds of communication styles because both have a different purpose.. Just as an example, the book of Deuteronomy is very different in the language it uses from the Song of Solomon. Some Christians never even read a book like Leviticus or Deuteronomy because it so boring to them. I have heard some people describe Song of Solomon to almost be pornographic because of its very sensual kind of language. This does not mean that when using “referential language” that it cannot convey emotion. For instance, if you went to the doctor and he told you that you had an “*inoperable melanoma of the pancreas*”, the emotions created from that would be overwhelming. To make all of this even more complicated, we have become very skilled in developing words and phrases to dumb down how someone may perceive something, or in our context, to change the perceptions and calm down the emotions involved in communicating a subject. Take the abortion debate and the kinds of terms that both sides use. One calls it a fetus, the other an unborn baby. One calls it pro-choice, the other pro-life. One calls it a woman’s

reproductive rights, the other calls it murder. Some call a prostitute an escort.<sup>1</sup> Even as Christians, we often seem more than willing to soften the impact of a word like “sin” or that sin is an abomination to God and call it a misjudgment or a mistake or an oversight on our part or a lack of maturity – anything to disguise, dismiss, and soften the impact of God’s Word on our life.

So, why even mention this? It is because at some point in the conversation, we have to understand how strongly an author is trying to convey something and how emotional he is about his content. Just at a personal level, I am convinced that Peter is very emotional about this passage we have been studying. He is trying to say things in such a way that they become extremely impactful on our life. I simply cannot read a passage of Scripture however I want to read it – listening to what I want to hear and ignoring what I do not want to hear. In the last message we talked about our theological grid, or the lens through which we see and perceive our life, and how greatly that theological grid impacts our perception of everything. For instance, and I mentioned this last week, but if your perception is that the Scriptures are basically 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. So, it is important and very critical 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.

In this message, what we want to do is to provide three areas of consideration relative to this theological grid that we all have. My intentions are very emotive, very emotional in nature, even though some of the information that I am going to communicate may seem very unemotional and boring. The issue, however, is very simple - if a person does not think godly, they will never be godly and they will never be obedient to the Word of God. I know a young teenage boy who drinks beer, smokes pot, smokes cigarettes, never studies for school, and never attends church or reads a Bible. His parents are not much different and so their level of influence on him at his young age is virtually meaningless at this point. Personally, unless God supernaturally intervenes in his life, I have very little hope for him. So, the design and motivation behind what we are addressing is to get husbands to think godly about their wives, to provoke husbands to truly love their wives like Christ loved the church and to begin to make this one vital and critical area to become a strategic goal and aim of their life. What we are about to address may very well bore you, but an understanding of what we are addressing is really very vital to how you are ultimately going to relate to God and to His Word, so I hope you pay close attention.

First, every text, every verse in the Scriptures has a particular and specific **meaning**, and that meaning contains the precise principles and truths that the author consciously intended for it to convey.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, our perception of what that verse means for us is what too often governs how we approach its truth. In reality, it does not matter what a verse or a passage actually means to us. What matters is what does it actually mean, not what it means to me. That is why you hear people say all the time “*You believe what you want, I will believe what I want*”. In a statement like that, it is almost as if truth does not matter, but what matters is what I want to believe about something. Obviously, we live in a different period of time and in a completely different culture than when the Bible was written, so what is important is that we extract from the Scriptures what the author intended for his audience when he wrote the passage. What the author intended at the moment he wrote the text can never change. We may find

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<sup>1</sup> Stein, 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Stein, 30.

ways to personally and culturally circumvent his original intention, but the meaning and the intention of what he wrote is indelibly circumscribed in his words. Even the author cannot change what he intended when he wrote it. An author may be able to amend what he said, but he cannot change what he intended to say when he said it. What he wrote was what he meant. It was not something that is left up to our imagination or conjecture or debate. His words had a specific meaning and very specific implications. I know that you may often become bored with my approach to teaching and providing a great number of word studies and breakdowns of verbs and their grammatical syntax. However, the reason that we spend so much time doing that is because I am not interested in teaching you what I think it means, but I want to teach what it actually means, what it meant to those the author was teaching. If we get the actual meaning of a word or passage wrong, then error begets error. From that point, everything becomes a very slippery slope at best. If someone gives you the wrong directions, invariably you will get lost. So, if you as a believer do not think that the specific meaning of a word is not that important in your life, then ultimately you are doomed to spiritual failure because you will simply default to what you think something means. Your opinion and my opinion about what something means has no value at all. The only thing that matters is what does it actually mean, not what I think it means.

Secondly, every command in Scripture has specific **implications** that may go well beyond the actual words of the author, and in reality the author himself may not be aware of what all of the implications may ultimately be. For instance, [Ephesians 5:18](#) says,

**Eph 5:18 (NKJV) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,**

This verse has many more far-reaching implications than the mere meaning of the words themselves. For instance, if Paul were here today, he would clearly tell us that his intentions and implications were not to tell us that it was wrong to get drunk on wine, but that it was perfectly okay to get drunk on beer or vodka or cocaine or marijuana. This is a case in point where the implications of a passage are much more far-reaching than just the mere meaning of the words. What Paul has done is that he has given us a principle about being filled with things that will harm our life in contrast with being filled and under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit which will only benefit our life. Our job is to understand the implications of what God is asking us to do. Relative to what we are studying in [1 Peter 3:7](#), the implications for a marriage and for a husband and wife are enormous and go far beyond the simple words of the verse. So, when we arrive at the accurate meaning of the various words, we simply cannot ignore their implications which will invariably go beyond their simple meaning.

Thirdly, and where I am headed in all of this, deals with the idea of **significance**. Listen very carefully so that you do not miss what we are dealing with in [1 Peter 3:7](#). Significance is a reference to how we are willing to actually respond to the meaning and implications that are given in a Scripture or a passage. It is a willed response, a volitional response. You can read a Scripture and in your mind say something like *“I know what it says, but I am not going to do that!”*. Christians do this all the time. They read a passage, they do not like what it says because they want to live a different way, so they just brush it aside and act like their ignoring it will have no meaningful impact on their life. It may not initially, but it certainly will eventually. So, the idea of “significance” involves a person’s attitude toward the meaning and implications of a text. If I can say it this way, it is the effect, the impact that the meaning and

implications of a text have on your life.<sup>3</sup> If you can read the Scriptures and them not have any major kind of impact on your life, then for all practical purposes you see them as being insignificant and unimportant. Stated another way, you really do not think that God or His Word are that important to your life.

I say this with as much grace as is possible, but there are many Christians who are completely oblivious to their attitude to the Scriptures. They are more than willing to just pick and choose what they are willing to obey, how faithful they are willing to be, and how committed they are going to be to Christ. It only takes one or two wrong assumptions about your life, and your perception and attitude towards the things of God will become virtually meaningless in your life. All you have to do is just set all of this in motion, just become comfortable in your life, in your priorities, in your ideas, and in your lifestyle, and before you know it, God and the things of God will literally vanish and disappear out of your life. If I can say all of this in a completely different way, the actual meaning of a passage belongs to the author, but its significance belongs to you the reader.<sup>4</sup> I.e., it may be a very important passage and have many implications, but have virtually no importance or significance to you personally.

Let me give an obvious example. Let us say that a young person decides that it is okay to cheat in school or to lie to their parents. They completely ignore what God's Word has to say relative to truthfulness and honesty. They know that it is there, but they are more than willing to completely ignore God's Word at that point in their life. They are more than satisfied to find any excuse that allows them to live how they want to live. Really, it could be anything – some form of immorality, pornography. They may claim to be believers, but somehow they are able to justify what they are doing because it is what they want to do. They completely ignore the many passages in the word of God that talk about truth and those things that are an abomination to God. Once they make that decision and move forward in their life, then they are just one step away from ignoring God and His Word relative to the next area where they do not want to obey Him. The word of God in that area of their life has no significance to them. Their attitude is to just ignore it. Eventually, nothing in the Scriptures will have any significance to them, and they will be living their life completely disconnected from God and His Word. What they fail to recognize are the ongoing consequences of living in disobedience to God and His Word. They have no idea of the long-term implications of these kinds of decisions in their life. No one escapes this reality. What seems like an escape is very short lived.

Okay, let us just switch gears for a moment and ask the question “*What is any different with a Christian husband or a Christian wife who completely ignore these verses we are studying as being insignificant?*” They may never say that they are insignificant, but they make no effort at understanding the implications of these verses for their personal life, and ultimately just casually ignore them. The husband does not really make any significant effort to love his wife like Christ loved the church and the wife makes no effort to respect and honor her husband. She is actually offended at the idea of submission. There is no meaningful effort to implement the implications of these kinds of verses into their life and marriage. The husband does not honor his wife and does not love his wife with a passionate affection and deep consideration. He is not helpful and defaults to his man-cave mentality that completely governs his life. The wife challenges everything her husband does, she contends with him constantly, and always has to

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<sup>3</sup> Stein, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Stein, 39.

have her way. What is any different about that scenario than the one of the young person not being honest? There is none, not one ounce of difference! Disobedience is disobedience. There is no difference whatsoever. Both have ignored the Word of God and it has become completely insignificant to them. If we understand this idea of personal significance, it is something that will constantly challenge us to always be finding practical ways to respond to the meaning and implications of a text – and especially ones that deal with marriage. As a believer, you are the master of this idea of significance. Why is that? It is because you are able to say yes or no to implementing God's Word into your life.

So, there are two elements involved here – (1) my understanding of the passage, and (2) my volition and willingness to choose to do what the passage says. The average Christian very often understands what a passage means and what are its implications, but then refuses to apply any of it to their life. We read it and ignore it – it is that simple. Jesus said it this way in [Luke 6:46](#),

**Lk 6:46 (NKJV) "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"**

That is not a good question for Jesus to be asking us. What good does it do to come to church and read our Bibles if we have no will, no determination, and no inclination to implement into our lives what the Scriptures say? At that point in our life, it has no value, but only helps us to masquerade the real indifference and insignificance that we have towards the Word of God in our life.

So, why spend two entire messages on all of this? Why emphasize meaning and implications and significance on a passage dealing with a husband honoring his wife? Why not just get to the word studies and the application of the verse? It is because if we have not allowed God to develop this concept of significance with regards to obeying and implementing His Word into our life, we will just breeze through these verses and they will never impact our marriages. If a husband does not have time for understanding the significance of God's Word in his life, then when he comes to a verse like **“loving your wife like Christ loved the church”**, he will completely ignore its implications for his life and just move on. The same for the wife. If she has no idea what submission even means, she will completely ignore its implications for her life and just move on. No wonder so many marriages fail, no wonder so many husbands and wives have no intimacy in their marriage, no wonder the church has become a repository for people who are much more uncommitted to Christ than they are committed to Him. It is all related to their lack of significance towards the Word of God. No wonder believers are not willing to respond to the meaning and implications that are given in a Scripture or a passage. It is because the Scriptures have no significance to them. In reality, they should have the greatest significance of anything else in the world. Unfortunately they do not. Please appreciate that every day of the Christian life is a test as to whether or not we are willing to yield and submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of our life. Either we are or we are not. It is a very intentional and volitional choice on our part. I hope over the next several weeks that you will come to these services with a deep seated willingness to both learn what is God's best for your marriage and then implement those things into it.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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