

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.

Last week we saw in [Ephesians 5:23](#) that the husband is the “**head of the wife**” in the same manner that Christ is the head of the church.

Eph 5:23 (NKJV) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

[1 Corinthians 11:3](#) reiterates this and says,

1Co 11:3 (NKJV) But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

The word “**head**” is a word in these contexts that speaks of authority, of strength, and of leadership.¹ Understanding what this word means is no small matter, so please do not take it lightly. When God declares you as the husband to be the head of your wife, it is an enormous responsibility and task. What it means is that the husband is to care for his wife in the same way that Christ cares for His church, in the same way that Christ exercises His headship and leadership over the church. Christ is the living head of His church and He is the model and example for the husband to follow. In the same way, the husband is to be a living model and a living example for his wife to emulate and follow. The husband cannot expect his wife to be something that he is not modeling for her.

So, in a practical way, what does that mean for us as husbands? Well, it means that the husband’s life is to be a clear representation and model for his wife of Christ Himself. Let us assume that there are things in your wife’s life that bother you and perturb you. If your wife irritates you or frustrates you or exasperates you or annoys you or angers you in any way, what that means is that most likely you are the one missing a Christlike quality that God wants you to have in your life. God is simply using your wife to reveal that to you. She is God’s instrument and God’s means of exposing you and sensitizing you to what God wants to develop in your life. Your wife is simply God’s tool to reveal that to you. So, whatever quality we may want our wife to display towards us is the very quality that we are to model for her. If there is a time in your marriage where you are not appreciative or approving of a particular area of her life, at that point you are to emulate the godly quality for her that you believe that she needs in her life. You are to literally model Christ for her in that area of her life. Her weakness and shortcoming becomes your God-given opportunity to model Christ for her.

For instance, if we think that she is impatient with the children, or impatient when people frustrate her, and we want her to be more patient, then we have to become a model of patience for her – and that will take time. Her impatience is the very thing that God is using to deepen the Christlike quality of patience into our life so that we can be her model. It is His way of deepening our love for our wife because we are willing to be patient and forbearing with her while God is working on that very area of her life. These spiritual fixes do not happen in a week or in a month – never. None of this is a quick fix. Unfortunately,

¹ Harris, *head*, #2747, ep.

the problem that too often happens is that the wife is the one modeling attributes of godliness and Christlikeness for the husband. My wife has taught me more about patience than any other person on the planet. It should have been the other way around. I should have been her model, but clearly I was not. She is one of the most patient people that you will ever meet. She is never in a hurry – never. She has always modeled patience for me and patience with me.

So, some of the reactions that reveal that a husband is not the model that Christ desires are the following. Pay close attention to each of these because this is not a nice list. My wrong reactions to my wife are things like frustration, irritation, dissatisfaction, aggravation, vexation, annoyance, impatience, anger, a short temper, touchiness, unhappiness, discontentment, grumpiness, being cranky, displeasure, and many more. This is not a nice list, but if we as husbands were sincerely transparent, I am sure that each of us have experienced every one of them many times in our marriages. I have been so frustrated before that I just wanted to scream, just walk out of the room, and just clam up and not talk. Those completely wrong reactions did not reveal anything about my wife, but they clearly revealed something negative about my life. I can assure you that I was anything but a model and example of Christlikeness. Looking back, I was a complete failure and had no clue what it meant to love my wife like Christ loved the church.

Here is the issue. Whenever our wife looks at us, what she is to see is Christ. That is the issue right there. Grab that and do not let go of it. She is to see Christ in every area of our life. She is not to see someone who is frustrated, irritated, angry, yelling, impatient, or harsh with his words. She is not to see someone who is careless, , annoyed, lazy, or hotheaded. We are the head, we are the model, we are the example, and she is to see Christ in us all the time. Anything less is a simple refusal to yield to God's calling on our life as a husband. I have come to the settled conclusion that what we are addressing in this passage, next to my relationship to Christ, is the highest and most sacred calling that I have on my life. Next to my personal walk with Christ, my wife is the highest priority in my life, and your wife and your relationship to her is to be exactly the same for you.

Now, I know that some husbands who may hear a message like this would be saying to themselves that me talking like this is simply "*pie in the sky and is not practically achievable*". They are going to say that marriage is a two way street and that they are not responsible for their wife's behavior. Well, you can say that if you want to, but what you say will not eliminate the spiritual demands of [1 Peter 3:7](#) or [Ephesians 5](#) from your life. You can make all of the excuses that you want to as to why you may be the exception, as to why your marriage and your wife is different, and why she is overbearing, over demanding, contentious, insensitive, or just too touchy about everything. You can come up with all the rationalizations as to why it is okay for you to be frustrated, harsh, and angry with her. As a pastor and as a husband, I have no intention of diminishing these godly demands on my life in any way. To the contrary, I have personally found [1 Peter 3:7](#) to be one of the most liberating verses in all of Scripture and one of the reasons that I am enjoying my Christian life as much as I am. Why is that? It is simply because it helps me to clearly understand what I have to do to enjoy God's absolute divine best for my life. I am to be enthralled and captivated with my wife. I am to see her like no other person on the planet, and the more I do, the more I enjoy the incredible riches of God's blessing on my life. My wife and my love for her is one of the primary means by which God literally pours His blessings into my life. It is what He does for every husband. This is how God works. This area of the Christian life is what makes the Christian life work. When a husband dedicates himself to working on this one area of his life,

God uses it to develop Christlikeness and godliness into his life. Husbands – listen very carefully. You will NEVER be a godly man if you do not love your wife like Christ loved the church. You will NEVER be Christlike if you do not give honor to your wife. You cannot bypass these demands on your life and on your behavior. You may live your entire marriage and completely miss what marriage is even about. You can have all the obvious essentials down like providing for her and protecting her. You may even be good at the physical side of marriage, so you think having those essentials down makes your marriage a good marriage. However, if you are not modeling Christ for your wife, then in all likelihood your marriage is probably mediocre at best. So be the head, be the model, be the example, and do not make any excuses for why you do not have to be. Make your wife your priority and God will literally lavish you with His blessings on your life.

Now, we want to begin to look at the word “**honor**” and determine what it really means for a husband to give honor to his wife. The word “**honor**” is the Greek word “*time*” and it means to respect, to reverence, and to esteem.² It carries the idea of having great value, of paying a great price for something that is uniquely valuable. For instance, [1 Corinthians 6:20](#) gives this same idea of paying a great price for something when it speaks of our salvation,

1Co 6:20 (NKJV) For you were bought at a price (*time*); therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Think of it this way. In the same way that you value Christ, in the same way that you esteem and reverence Christ, that is exactly the same attitude that you are to have towards your wife. [Ephesians 5:25](#) says,

Eph 5:25 (NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

The important words for us are “**just as**”. In the same way, in exactly the same manner that Christ “**gave**” His life for His bride, every husband is, in the same way, to give their life for their wife. They are to “**love**” their wife in exactly the same way or “**just as**” Christ loved His church. In the same way that God calls on you to honor Christ, to see Christ as utterly precious and invaluable to your life, in that same exact way the husband is to “**honor**” his wife. In the same way that I personally am joined to Christ as “**a living stone**”, I am to become intimately one with my wife. This is not just a physical union, but a much deeper spiritual and emotional union with her, and I cannot do that and will not do that if I do not personally take a verse like this very seriously. As a husband, if you can just casually read over a verse like this and give it little to no attention, then please do not point the finger at your wife. You are the head, the model, and the example of what your marriage should be. So, the major thrust of the word “**honor**” deals with ascribing a certain worth and value to a person. It is the idea that the wife is due a special honor in the husband’s life.

Now, what we need to do is to try and determine exactly how showing this kind of honor and esteem for our wife practically demonstrates itself in our marriage. How can we practically work this out in the day to day grind of living, of working, of raising a family, and of all of the other time-consuming activities and goals that seem to always be driving us? How can we take a verse like [1 Peter 3:7](#) and translate it

² Zodhiates, 1383.

into our role as a husband? Well, I want to give you a very simple, yet basic principle to help you and to jump start all of this in your life. However, before doing that, I have to reiterate how seriously you as a husband have to take these verses that we have been addressing. You are not the exception for ignoring these because of some notions that you may have about marriage and your wife's responsibility. I have taught this often and will continue to do so, but in every area of our life, and certainly marriage is one of those areas, in every area I am to concentrate wholly on what God has called on me to do. Let us say that the wife is not behaving properly and has multiple emotional and marital issues. The worst thing that a husband can do is to try and fix his wife. That will not work. Certainly we can talk about issues and certainly we are not going to bury our head in the sand and always ignore things that are wrong and hurting the marriage. To the contrary, we must be transparent and honest, but that does not mean that we can change the other person. I cannot change anyone. I cannot change my wife. The wife cannot change her husband. The only person I can change is me, and the way that I change me is by my obedience to God and His Word. So, if a husband does not take a verse like this with a sense of gravity and seriousness, then he has no right to expect his wife's behavior to change. The husband simply has to see himself as the major instrument that God has chosen to use in his wife's life, and therefore he becomes fully responsible to "**honor**" his wife in the same way that Christ honored His Father and gave Himself for the church. If the husband does not understand this verse and the incredible demands that it is making on his personal life as a husband, then his marriage will be mediocre at best.

So, here is a basic principle to embrace if you want a practical way to honor your wife. **Find out what your wife loves doing and then do it with her.** The average husband is going to say "*I just don't like doing that*" and so he want, and then he wonders why he has such an unexceptional marriage and why his wife is unresponsive to him. What you want to happen is that you want to become her very best friend, the one person that she always wants to be with, that person that makes her feel more special than any other person in the world. You want to do everything possible with her and for her. So, figure out what she really loves to do, and then go do it with her. For instance, if she loves to walk, go walk with her. If she loves to garden, then build her the best garden a woman could ever have. If she loves to go shopping, then go shopping with her. If she loves to cook, then you learn how to cook with her. If she loves to get exercise, then you go exercise with her. Whatever it is that your wife loves to do, whatever it is that gives her great pleasure and satisfaction, then you be her very best friend in that and other areas of her life. You do everything that you can to make her feel special and wanted and loved. You make sure that she always looks nice and has the clothes that she needs to feel like a woman. You find ways to complement her on everything that she does for you and for your family. If she is a great cook, you let her know how good of a cook she is everytime she cooks a great meal. If she does a bunch of remedial tasks that makes your life much more comfortable and convenient, then you let her know what that means to you and how grateful you are that God gave her to you as your wife. When she makes herself attractive for you, you let her know how incredibly beautiful she is to you. You let her know that there is no woman that could ever take her place or capture your heart like she does. Get up and fix her breakfast, take her out for a great meal at a nice restaurant – just you and her. Men, get on this horse and ride! Just go be with your wife and do everything possible for her that you can do, and she will love you forever. Tell her how important she is and how she meets your deepest needs.

Now, unfortunately, for the average husband, this is much too difficult and much too demanding. He has way too many activities mapped out for his life. He has all of the things that he wants to get done, and quite frankly, spending a lot of time with his wife is not a priority. He had rather be playing golf with his good buddies. The old adage holds very true in this area that if you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you always got. Men, you have to make a mental and volitional adjustment to do what we are addressing – and for many men who are already just set in their ways, this will not be easy. The issue, though, is that [1 Peter 3:7](#) and the idea of showing honor and giving honor and esteem to your wife is a command. As a husband, you have to have a paradigm shift from the cultural values that seem to permeate our lives. It is not about being macho or masculine. It is always, always, always about being like Christ.

Listen. You may already have all of this worked out and worked into your marriage. If that is the case, great! I am convinced that you have reached that place that your wife really loves you and already sees you as her best friend – and she should. However, if you know that your marriage needs some improvements, then you need to evaluate whether or not you have really honored and esteemed your wife in the way that God truly want you to do so. Do not let your wife's behavior dictate your behavior or your choices. Just do what you know God's Word clearly tells you to do and then let God change your wife. You let God use you as that instrument of change in her life. You be the model and example of what real genuine Christlike love is all about, and your wife will begin to love you in a way that you never dreamed possible. You be Christ to her and for her. Just let Him live through you!

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