

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 looked at the word “**honor**” which is the Greek word “*time*” and it means to respect, to reverence, and to esteem. It carries the idea of having great value, of paying a great price for something that is uniquely valuable. Then we saw from [Ephesians 5:25](#) that the husband is to love his wife “**just as**” Christ loved the church. The words “**just as**” mean in exactly the same way. We also saw that 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, an honor that only he can give to her. If for whatever reason he refuses to provide this honor to her, then in reality he is depriving her of a God ordained spiritual inheritance that God wants her to have. In essence, he is stealing from her something that God wants her to have. Lastly, we began to look at exactly how a husband can honor his wife and we determined that he was to **find out what his wife loves doing and then do it with her**.

Now, this morning we want to continue to determine how a husband should honor his wife, how he should show the reverence and respect for her that God wants him to give to her. I want to reiterate that none of what we are addressing relieves the wife of her responsibilities as well. Her being contentious, overly sensitive to everything, emotionally distraught half the time, and just difficult to please has no place in the marriage either. That is a given. Her responsibilities and reactions to her husband have just as much importance as does his, so she is to do her part. Just like the husband, God does not give her the right to always be pointing the finger at her husband as if he is always the problem. The issue for both the husband and the wife is that each one is to simply concentrate on exactly what God wants him or her to do. As a husband, I cannot change my wife, so it is critical that I simply honor God’s commands on my life, obey them, and leave the results to God. He is able to change people, not me and not you. I said it in the last study and I will reiterate it again that I do not have the power to change anyone, and the more that I try, the greater will be the frustrations and the greater will be the disappointments. In essence when I try to change someone, what I am doing is assuming a responsibility that God never intended for me to have. However, when we begin to see marriage from God’s perspective, when we finally understand how marriage really works, it is then that God begins to show Himself strong on our behalf.

What we are trying to do in this part of [1 Peter](#) is to engrain into our marriages what I want to call a “**marriage culture**”, and that is able to happen when both the husband and the wife concentrate specifically on what God wants them to do. A culture is a specific way that people live. It involves everything about their life – how they spend their time and their resources, what are the priorities of their life, how they treat one another, what is important to them, and how they integrate all of these things into their life. So, you as a husband and you as a wife have to clearly, clearly understand what your specific role is in the marriage. You are to do everything possible to fulfill that role and to honor the Word of God in that area of your marriage. You are doing all that you can do to build a kind of marital culture that is second to none. It is a culture where you are willing to always honor and respect your mate, where you are always willing to defer to their needs, where you are not willing to be a complainer

and a griper and a fault finder. You are the one who always is willing to humble yourself and to love your partner sacrificially. In that kind of marriage culture, what you are ultimately doing is honoring God with your life. You are giving yourself completely to make your marriage the very best marriage possible.

Now, the problem that most couples have is that they see marriage as a 50/50 proposal – you do your part, I will do my part. If that is your attitude, if that is your perspective, and if that is your inclination, then you have destined your marriage to failure. Nothing ever works well at 50% - nothing. I would hate to get into my truck to go home today and my brakes only work at 50%, or only half of my cylinders work. I would hate for my HVAC system at home to only work at 50% efficiency, or for the airplane engines to only have half the thrust that they need to lift off the ground. Nothing works well at 50%. It is no different in the marriage. Both the husband and the wife have to give 100% to the marriage and to their specific role and responsibilities in the marriage. Often times what happens is that the marriage hits some bumps in the road, and immediately the partners begin to lessen their spiritual resolve and marital responsibilities and they begin to become distant from one another. They become very critical and angry with one another, almost caustic and venomous in what they say and how they treat one another. The next thing you know is that they are both blaming the other partner for the problems. If that is true for you in your marriage and you take that position, then you have completely missed what God wants you to do. In reality, those bumps in the road are often the simple evidence that we are not doing what God wants us to do and that rather than fulfilling our God designed and God ordained role as either husband or wife, that we have actually forsaken it. We begin to rationalize that “*none of this is my fault*” and that “*my marriage partner is the problem, not me*”. We see ourselves as always right and our partner as always wrong. In my mind, that is completely backwards, completely the opposite of what God wants us to do. When those marriage issues begin to arise, in essence what God genuinely wants us to do is to strengthen and to intensify our love for our mate – not diminish it. When I have the personal resolve to love my partner unconditionally, what I am really doing is demonstrating my love for God and my willingness to submit myself to His divine way of life. For the average Christian marriage, what we are talking about is a complete paradigm shift in how they think about the marriage.

So, what are some other ways in which the husband can honor his wife. Well first as a husband, if you are going to honor your wife in the way that God truly wants you to, what that means is that **you have put your wife first in all things, in everything, and you put yourself second**. You do everything possible to honor your wife by putting her in first place and by fully giving yourself to meeting her specific needs – whatever they are. As the husband, you are the God-ordained leader, protector, and provider of your family, but with that responsibility you are also the “**head**” which means that you are to ALWAYS be the example and the model of Christlikeness and godliness for your wife. When I think of what Peter meant when he said that the wife was the “**weaker vessel**”, what he was really saying is that she is the fine china and not the plastic plates. She has such great value in the marriage that you treat her as if she is the fine china. When you put your wife first, you make all of your plans around her. If you go out on a date or a vacation, go where she wants to go. It means less time with all of your hobbies and watching your favorite sports, and spending much more time with her. This is exactly what it means to give her first place. It means that everything else in your life is secondary to what your wife wants and needs – both physically and emotionally. What you are doing is continuing to pursue your

wife like you did before you got married, You are doing everything possible to esteem her and to honor her so that she feels like the most special person on the planet.

Secondly, and this is a very critical attribute, is that **the husband is to honor his wife with a great and reverent gentleness**. What this means is that he must exercise self-control when things are not exactly what he would want. A husband cannot become angry with his wife. He cannot be barking at her and yelling at her. The moment he becomes angry with his wife, at that very moment he will begin to say things that will deeply hurt his wife and things that he will later regret. Nothing is more damaging to a marriage than verbal and physical anger – nothing. It undermines and destroys the wife's love and respect for her husband. Anger absolutely destroys any possibility of meaningful intimacy in the marriage. It diminishes the husband's role as the Christlike head of his family, and if not checked, it will become his way of life – always verbally expressing his displeasure with his wife and his anger when he does not like something that she may have said or done. A husband must learn how to respond to difficult moments in the marriage with gentleness and not with anger. I love the verse in [Proverbs 15:1](#) that says,

Pr 15:1 (NKJV) **A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

What this verse is clearly telling us is that the more angry we become, the more harsh will be our words. Just give a “**soft answer**” and a gentle answer in a moment of tension. When I use to get angry, my wife always spoke to me in a soft and gentle way – always. It was something that just de-railed me at times. Her gentleness made it so difficult for me to continue in anger. The husband's self-control regarding his personal tendency to anger is a demonstration to his wife of his love for her. His anger is a sign of rejecting his wife and that he really is not willing to love her the way that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. [1 Timothy 6:11](#) says the following to a godly man,

1Ti 6:11 (NKJV) **But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

[Ephesians 4:1-3](#) says,

Eph 4:1 (NKJV) **I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

This is exactly what I am to bring into my marriage. These are the qualities that create intimacy and oneness in the marriage. These are the qualities that create a godly marriage culture. The word “**gentleness**” is the Greek word “*praotes*” and it means meekness, mildness, and strongly carries the idea of forbearance, restraint, patience, and mercy in dealing with someone. It always speaks of an inward grace of the soul, a calmness towards God. A calmness towards God is always demonstrated in a calmness towards others. It is that quality that accepts God's dealings with us as good in that they are what God uses to enhance the closeness of our relationship with Him.¹ [Proverbs 17:27](#) says,

Pr 17:27 (NKJV) **He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.**

¹ Zodhiates, 1208

Whenever I see a man that is always angry with his wife, what that immediately tells me is that there is something seriously flawed in His personal relationship with God. His wife is not the problem. He is the problem, and he is simply unwilling to let God deal with that area of his life. If that is the case, then he absolutely has no right to demand a change in the wife's behavior. He is the model, he is the example, and he must exercise great self-control and gentleness when things become difficult in the marriage. Anger is the visible and audible evidence that God is not controlling his life. In the marriage setting, the husband is clearly called to be gentle with his wife and how he treats her and how he talks to her. He is to always, always, always see his wife as a woman of immense value to both him and to their family. Anything less is a refusal on his part to honor God and His Word in this area of his life.

Thirdly, **always speak kindly to your wife**. Use kind words, use gracious words, use loving words. Never, ever speak harshly to your wife - ever. [Galatians 5:22](#) says

Gal 5:22 (NKJV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

[Colossians 3:12](#) says,

Col 3:12 (NKJV) **Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;**

The word for “**kindness**” is “*chrestotes*” and what makes it very interesting is that it comes from a root word that simply means to be useful and profitable.² It is the opposite New Testament word for harshness, callousness, and expressions of anger. It should be more than obvious that generally the first way in which we demean someone is with our words and how we talk to them, and this can become a way of life in a marriage. In fact, a husband not speaking kind words to his wife is the seedbed for destroying the marriage. Harsh, angry, and ugly words are much more hurtful than anything else we can do. Always find ways to complement your wife, to say amazing things about her. Always be telling her how much she means to you and how valuable she is to your life. [Proverbs 16:24](#) says,

Pr 16:24 (NKJV) **Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.**

Always be telling your wife how much she means to you, how special she is to you, and how much you love and appreciate her. Never stop. Drive that habit into your marriage culture. Make it a priority of your life to always be telling your wife how special she is to you and how invaluable she is to your life. Always be telling her how her life is a constant encouragement to you. Tell her what she means to you. Husbands, you simply cannot tell your wife enough as to how much she means to you and how grateful you are that she is your wife and lover and encourager. You cannot tell her enough! Find ways to tell your wife of all of the specific things that she does for you that you so deeply appreciate and that simplify and enhance your life. It is all of the simple things that generally just go unnoticed. Every wife wants to be appreciated for all of the minor things that they do – washing clothes, folding clothes, preparing meals, managing the needs of the children, keeping the house clean and comfortable – anything, everything. Never treat your wife like she is your servant. I always tell my wife that she is my queen and I never want to treat her like a servant. Remember what Peter has told us that she is “**an heir**

² Zodhiates, 1482.

together of the grace of life". My wife is not my maid. She is my queen and my life, and I am to treat her that way.

Fourthly, **make time with your wife an ultimate priority of your life**. Put her first on your calendar, and make everything else secondary to her and her needs. Do not always be giving your wife the leftovers of your strength and vitality, but give her your best energies, give her your best times. Continue to pursue your wife similar to what you did before you were married. Most men are totally unromantic in their relationship with their wife. As long as they can have the sex they want, then for them romance is satisfied. Make sure that you are giving her the time that she needs to just talk with you. I personally believe that a wife's need for intimate conversation is as strong as a husband's need for sex. Turn off the phone, turn off the TV, turn off the computer and just sit down on the porch with your wife and talk with her. Go for a walk with her so that you can talk. I personally love to take my wife out to eat, and one of the reasons is because it provides a great opportunity for us to just be together alone and talk. We talk in the truck, we talk at the meal, and we talk on the way home – and almost without any interruption. We hold hands, I open the door for her, I buckle her seat belt, we talk constantly about anything and everything.

Husbands, there may be times in your wife's life where she is struggling to just believe in herself. It could be an emotional issue or a physical issue or a family issue. It could be a combination of these things. When that happens, be there for her and build her up with your words. Elevate her with kind and gracious words of deep and loving encouragement. Always be telling her about your personal and unconditional commitment and devotion to her – no matter what she may be going through at the time. I have a Christian man that I met where I get my infusions, and he is the epitome of what I am addressing. His wife has some terrible afflicting disease and she is always in pain, always hurting, always nauseous, always discouraged. She has the following conditions. She has Meniere's Disease which is an inner ear and balance disorder, fibromyalgia which causes widespread musculoskeletal pain accompanied by chronic fatigue and sleep, memory, and mood issues. It actually amplifies painful sensations. She also has IBS with terrible stomach issues. She is in constant pain all day. There is no cure for her condition and no medicinal relief. She is always miserable, always in a fairly bad mood, always has a headache, and always feeling down. However, this man loves his wife unconditionally and he is always there for her. Unless he has to go and get an infusion like me, he is always with his wife. He virtually never leaves her except for something that he has to get like groceries. I love his love for his wife. He has made his wife and her physical disease as the priority of his life to care for her and to love her. I have never one time heard him say one word of complaint about what he has to do to care for her. He has made her the ultimate priority of his life.

Now, as we close this study, it is important for me to give a warning to the wives. There are many verses that speak to a wife that is not fulfilling her role as a wife. For instance, [**Proverbs 12:4**](#) says,

Pr 12:4 (NKJV) An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones.

[**Proverbs 14:1**](#) says,

Pr 14:1 (NKJV) The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

Proverbs 21:9 says,

Pr 21:9 (NKJV) **Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.**

Everything that we are teaching the husbands is to help them to become the very kind of husband that you want them to be. The changes will not occur overnight and you should not expect them to occur that quickly. My encouragement to you is not to use any of these principles as something to criticize your husband for not doing and as a kind of “weapon:” against him. Do not say to him that “*Pastor Gary said in his sermon that...*” Never do that, absolutely never do that. You just do your part and let God work on your husband through His Word. God is able to accomplish much more through the convicting work of His Word and His Spirit than a lifetime of your personal efforts to reform your husband. You are not your husband’s spiritual authority and it is not your job to rebuke him and criticize him when you think that he is not the kind of husband he should be. According to **1 Peter 3:1-6**, you are to show him great respect and to serve him and love him with what **1 Peter 3:4** calls the “**incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit**”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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