

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 3:7, with Ephesians 5:25 (NIV based)

TITLE: Comprehensive Considerateness, Love, And Respect Of Husbands To Their Wife

BACKGROUND:

- - The topic of 'enduring suffering for doing good is commendable to God' (1 Peter 2:18ff) applies to 'wives', in relation to their 'husbands' (vv.3:1ff).
 - - Now here in 1 Peter 3:7, that same topic applies to 'husbands', in relation to their 'wives'.
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v.7 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, expand on, and then explain the implications and applications of the concepts contained in the first phrase and the phrase "as the weaker partner" in verse 7.]

SECTION POINT: Within the authority that God has given husbands in their marriage, they have responsibility and accountability to always be comprehensively considerate towards their wife.

"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives,"

- - Following the various mandates and teaching that are directed to wives in previous verses 1-6, now the focus and teaching shifts to the "husbands".
- - Similar to that of the wives, the husbands likewise or "in the same way" have responsibilities and accountability before God for their behaviors within their marriage.
- - Husbands are under the same authority of and accountability to God that their wife is, for the distinct role that God has assigned the husbands.
- - There is no favoritism by God here, no giving of special leniency in accountability before God to one person over the other person in a marriage.
- - So obviously, from previous verses 1-6, the husbands being given authority from God over their wife plants and heaps huge responsibility upon the husbands to always use this authority in a manner that is pleasing to God.

- - The first mandate cited here for husbands, as they possess and exercise their authority over their wife (v.1), is to "be considerate as you live with your wife".
- - The husband's use of authority needs to be saturated with 'considerateness' "according to" "knowledge" and understanding that the husband is to have about marriage, about his wife, about living together with his wife, about God, and about godliness. (Strong's #2596, #1108)
- Therefore, this 'considerateness' 'according to' 'knowledge' manifests as:
 - - - - realizing and acknowledging the various dynamics of a marriage relationship;
 - - - - nurturing the premier crucial component in a marriage for the necessity of excellent, edifying, and enjoyable interaction between the husband and the wife;

- - - - accommodating the various needs, feelings, and fulfillment that the wife has or develops;
- - - - and ensuring that suitable living conditions are in place, are being maintained, and are being continuously and adequately supplied.
- - With authority comes responsibilities. And with this authority in a marriage comes these kinds of responsibilities that relate to marriage, and relate to having children, if or when that happens.

"...as the weaker partner"

- - Within their being considerate to their wife, husbands are to keep in mind the 'knowledge' that their wife is "female" and thereby "weaker", in comparison to the husband. (Strong's #1134)
- - God has determined and made women as 'weaker' than men, therefore this characteristic of women should not be regarded in a negative way, and instead should be regarded as an honorable virtue.
- - Furthermore, this intentional choice by God to make women 'weaker' implies that this characteristic of being 'weaker' is important and necessary in order for the marriage and its subsequent family to function in a healthier manner than it otherwise would if women were not created with this characteristic.
- - This implication certainly has apparent support in the Scriptures, wherein God created humans, both "male and female", "in His own image" - to reflect perfect, righteous, and holy characteristics that God possesses. (Genesis 1:27)
- - As evidence, within the tri-unity of God there is subordination and submissiveness of the Son and the Spirit, to the Father.
- - Also, within the nature of God, there are qualities that display strength and power, such as leadership, assertiveness, management, providing, protecting, and assisting.
- - And there are qualities of God that display lesser strength or intentional weakness or softness, such as tenderness, gentleness, peacefulness, caregiving, nurturing, patience, and forbearance, such as for example, in complete innocence being severely tortured unto death on the cross, without even raising a hand or speaking a word in resistance, objection, or defense (1 Peter 2:21-23).
- - From these obvious evidences and parallels, it seems highly likely that God has made and extended the relationship of marriage between a man and a woman to mirror qualities and characteristics about God - in His image, so to speak, in order to maximize beneficial conditions, relational healthiness, and well-being of the two adults in the marriage and their children.

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, expand on, and then explain the implications and applications of the concepts contained in the remainder of verse 7, and those contained in Ephesians 5:25.]

SECTION POINT: Husbands are also accountable to God to extensively love their wife and treat her with full respect.

"and treat them with respect... as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life,"

- - The second mandate from God is that husbands are to "treat [their wife] with respect", "bestowing" and extending "honor, value, esteem, and dignity" to their wife. (Strong's #0632, #5092)

- - A valid implication here is that this 'respect' needs to be all-encompassing - in other words, respect that is enveloping, embracing, and applied to all that the wife is, all that God made her and women to be, even though there are distinct and significant differences from all that God made men to be.

- - Additionally, each husband is to treat his wife with full respect because she is his wife - the person he chose and committed to live the rest of his life with, side-by-side, "united" together, as "one". (Genesis 2:24)

- - She deserves being treated with full respect also because God supplied her for the husband, as a companion and "suitable helper". (Genesis 2:18)

- - For every wife who is a true believer, she furthermore deserves being treated with full respect by her true believer husband because she is a recipient or an "heir with [him] of the gracious gift of life" in heaven eternally.

- - The true believer wife has acceptance and status before God as a recipient of eternal life, which are exactly like and equal to that which the true believer husband has.

- - Another relating important mandate from God for husbands is in Ephesians 5:25, **"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"**.

- - This love goes beyond being a general kind of love, in that it is a self-sacrificing love.

- - This self-sacrificing love is characterized by the husband loving his wife so much that he willingly labors and voluntarily endures personal discomfort or even suffering, in order to provide what is good and beneficial for his wife, for her well-being, nurture, and development.

- - Compelled by his love for her, the husband makes sacrifices in pursuing his own comfort and pleasures, in order to supply comfort, pleasure, and "care for" his wife, like he would care for himself. (vv.28-29)

- - So in effect, the husband "loves his wife as he loves himself". (v.33)

- - In possessing and exerting this self-sacrificing love for his wife, the husband is emulating the self-sacrificing love that Christ possessed and exerted for the church. (v.25)

- - And of course, God would determine that the exerting of this kind of love and "enduring suffering for doing good" is "commendable" for the husband. (1 Peter 2:20)

1 Peter 3:7 "...so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

- - The mandates from God in 1 Peter 3:7 come with a warning of an adverse consequence.

- - When husbands are not 'considerate' of their wife or do not 'treat their wife with respect', then God will "cut off" responding to the prayers of those husbands. (Strong's #1581)

- - This adverse consequence upon those husbands implies that God will immediately impose this consequence when these mandates are violated by a husband, and that thereupon the husband's ongoing relationship with God has incurred some dysfunction and disruption.

-- A reasonable conclusion here is that God sides with or aligns Himself in defense of the wife in being treated properly by her husband because in her willful and total submission to her husband, she is utterly vulnerable to being mistreated and harmed by her husband.

-- Husbands would be wise to heed this warning, and to become and remain mindful of other relating dynamics that their wife struggles with, such as for examples:

--- the wife's total willful submission to her husband is entirely opposite of and repulsive to her nature as a human being;

--- the wife will have intense emotions and fears of submitting to her husband and of being dependent upon him;

--- the wife has a somewhat different psychological nature and thereby has some different needs than the husband has;

--- the wife will have major displeasure over her husband's lack of loving leadership;

--- the wife has some reduced capabilities and some inabilities in aspects that the husband naturally has competency and skill.

-- Husbands would be wise to identify, assist, and nurture the wife in developing the strengths and abilities that God has given her, especially in regard to spiritual abilities and giftedness to serve God.

BIG IDEA: Within their God-given authority over their wife, husbands are accountable to God to be comprehensively considerate, loving, and respectful to their wife.

APPLICATIONS:

-- For those of you who are a husband, in truth how do you regard and treat your wife?

-- Do you regard and/or treat her as your slave? Or as inferior to you? Or as stupid?

-- When you have a disagreement or argument with your wife, do you ever respond to her with any sarcasm, demeaning, ridiculing, cussing, ranting, railing, insulting, threatening, or retaliating? If so, what does God think about you responding to her in any of these disrespectful manners?

-- After now having listened to this study of 1 Peter 3:7 with Ephesians 5:25, do you think it is necessary for you to make some changes in how you regard and treat your wife?

-- Are you willing to immediately cease all of the hurtful regard, treatment, and responses that you have and do to your wife?

-- Suppose your wife regards you with disdain, and even is verbally abusive to you. Are you willing nevertheless to cease all of the hurtfulness that you launch at her?

-- Are you now committed and fully determined to always regard, treat, and respond to your wife in the godly manner that has been mandated to you by God in these verses?

-- If not, what valid reason can you possibly have why you are not going to obey God in these mandates, even if you suffer for doing what is right and good and beneficial for her, or even if you think she does not deserve to be treated in this godly manner?

- - Are you willing to extend comprehensive considerateness, love, and respect to your wife, no matter how she regards and treats you?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What qualities would a true believer husband need to possess and consistently maintain in order to 'win over' his non-believing wife to become a true believer (1 Peter 3:1)? In what ways would his approach be similar or be different to the approach described in 1 Peter 3:1-6 of the true believer wife winning over here non-believer husband?

- - As an interesting and perhaps humorous exercise, what appropriate analogies can you think of that would characterize how husbands are to treat their wife? For examples: husbands should treat their wife like a delicate flower; or husbands should not use a bulldozer in their approach to get their wife to move in the direction that they want her to go.]

Works Cited:

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"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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