

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 6/20/93
I Peter 3:7 "How to be a Husband that Pleases God"

Baby Dedication: Today is Father's Day. 4 families desire to dedicate...

Intro: Illust: Stories about the family (D. Jeremiah)

This morning we have come to part 2 of a 2 week mini-series entitled, "How to Experience a Marriage That God Blesses." The text which is our focus--I Peter 3:1-7.

Last Week: "The Best Thing a Wife Can Give Her Husband"

Today: "How to be a Husband that Pleases God"

READ I Peter 3:1-7.

Last Week: Peter addressed the Christian wives. He had in mind a particular type of Christian wife, one that had a non-Christian husband. How could she reach him? For that matter, what's the best thing any wife can give to her husband? God's Word reveals three things about submission in I Peter 3:1-6.

I. The Importance of Submission (1a)

II. The Influence of Submission (1b-4)

A. A wife can influence by her Behavior (1-2).

B. A wife can influence by her Beauty (3-4).

1. Not outward beauty (3)

2. Inward beauty (4)

That's where we left off last week.

Q: "Wait! Is it really possible to be this kind of a wife?"

III. The Illustrations of Submission (5-6)

Peter says, "Yes, it's possible to be this kind of wife. In fact, wives that please God have always subjected themselves to their own husbands."

Vv 5-6 "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also..."

Q: Who does Peter mean by "the holy women"?

We can't be sure. But since he mentions Sarah in v 6, he may have in mind the four mothers of Judaism: Sarah, Rebekkah, Leah, and Rachel.

The point is not WHO, but WHAT. What do wives do that please God?

1. Who trusted in God

2. Were in subjection to their own husbands

Listen carefully. This goes for husbands and wives. Your relationship with God, and your relationship with your spouse go hand in hand. A wife that pleases God is both a wife that is right with God and right with her husband.

Application: If I tell my spouse off in the car on the way to church, I'll have trouble singing "Tis So Sweet to Trust" in the worship service!

Holy women are those, who like Sarah, do 2 things. One, they trust in God. That is, God is #1 in their lives. They depend on Him. And two, they are in subjection to their husband. We talked about that last week. To be subject means to

place under rank, to recognize your husband's God-given role as the leader of the home.

Objection: "But this submission talk is outdated! Peter lived 2000 years ago!"

Let me ask you something. When did Sarah live? 2000 years before Peter! Do you think Peter's readers said, "Hold on Peter, things were different 2000 years ago!"

God's design for the family has not changed. Sarah obeyed Abraham. She called him lord. That doesn't mean boss. That simply means that she recognized Abe as the leader and head of their household.

Submission is not the spineless fear of a husband. No. God designed marriage to be a team. The roles of husbands and wives are different, yet they blend. We don't compete, we complement each other.

Illust:

Now, what about the husbands?

Q: How can I be a husband that pleases God?

Proposition: According to I Peter 3:7, husbands have 2 primary tasks.

I. Task #1: Know your wife.

A. This involves Observation.

B. This involves Communication.

II. Task #2: Honor your wife.

A. The Physical Reason

B. The Spiritual Reasons

Think about it: Your relationship with your spouse affects your relationship with God.

Don't miss the first phrase.

V 7 "In like manner, ye husbands"

In like manner. Like what, Peter? The context goes all the way back to 2:13. 2:13 begins what we've called the "Submission Section" of Peter's letter. What's the best way for the church to impact a godless world? Let the world see Christ in us.

Stat: A recent survey shows that 79% of our population considers "religion" as an important issue in their lives. In spite of this 71% have no particular church affiliation. There's a breakdown. The church is not seen as relevant.

God's Word has a serious message for us. We need to let the world see Christ:

--In the way we relate to Civil authorities (2:13-17)

--In the way we relate to our bosses on the job (2:18-25)

--In our family relationships (3:1-7)

In like manner. The world ought to be able to see Christ in wives. In like manner, the world ought to be able to see Christ in husbands.

Quote: Howard Hendricks, "If your Christianity doesn't work at home, it doesn't work. Don't export it!" (Dobson, "Straight Talk" 92)

Q: What does God expect of husbands? Two primary tasks...

I. Task #1: Know your wife.

V 7 "Dwell with them according to knowledge"

The word "dwell" is a compound word that fuses together 2 greek words: the word for "house" and the word "with." Be in the same house with, hence, dwell with.

Sounds simple enough. "So I'm supposed to live in the same house with my wife. I do that. What's so hard about that?"

Notice the next modifying phrase, "according to knowledge." Husbands, we are to dwell with our wives according to knowledge. Or simply put, here's the charge, "Husband, know your wife."

Q: How well do you know your wife?

Illust: Dobson says he knew of a gynecologist (96)...

Men, how well do you know your wife? This is my observation, although it's certainly not mine alone. Most husbands do not know their wives. You may be thinking, "What are you talking about? Of course I know my wife. I've been married to her for 22 years."

Illust: About 4 months ago, we began Men's Groups. Men were given a sheet entitled, "50 Questions to ask your Wife." I was staggered at the results. I heard other men confess, "Wow! I found out things about my wife I never knew before." But what struck me the most was the realization that I really didn't know my wife that well either.

And listen men. What we're talking about isn't optional equipment. It's part of the standard package. Peter is emphatic. Husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge! Husbands, get to know your wives!

Knowing my wife involves 2 activities (which I must initiate):

A. This involves Observation.

Objection: Right now, more than one man in this room is thinking, "I just can't know my wife. I can't get into her world. I don't know how to get to know her."

Granted, some men are intimidated by the thought of getting into their wife's world. Some men never saw it modeled by their fathers. Maybe your dad was a great man, but he wasn't a communicator. He left the house at 7:00 every day, returned at 5:00, ate supper while reading the newspaper, hit the couch to watch TV until 11:00, when he went to bed. The next day the same routine. For 40 years. About the only words you ever heard him say to your mother were, "What time's dinner? Where's my newspaper? Where's the checkbook? Goodnight."

Now listen men. Knowing our wives involves observation. And most of us struggle right here. We're not very observant of our wives. It's not that we can't be observant. We observe lots of other things. Let me ask some questions.

Q: What size engine did your first car have? 350, 4 barrel

Q: What was Jim Brown's jersey number for the Cleveland Browns? 32

Q: How many home runs did Roger Marris hit to break Ruth's record?

Q: Who was the manager for the Big Red Machine during its dynasty? Sparky

Now these...

- Q: What is your wedding anniversary date? Anniversary of your first date?
 Q: What is your wife's favorite color? food? verse in the Bible?
 Q: What is it that brings the greatest delight to your wife? Her greatest fear?

You say, "How would I know those things?! I'm not very observant!"

Key: We observe things we WANT to observe. Wouldn't you think that the same mind that could notice the size of an engine could remember an anniversary date?

It's amazing that 2 married people can live together and not really know each other. So how do we get to know our spouse? First, observation...

B. This involves Communication.

The NIV puts v 7 this way, "Husbands, be considerate as you live with your wives." Did you notice what Peter assumes? He assumes that husbands will spend time with their spouses. And the implication, I think, is that they'll spend time communicating. Why? Because if I'm going to get to know my wife, that involves communication.

Communication takes effort, and time. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had 37 minutes A WEEK together in actual communication! Is it any wonder why marriages are crumbling. A lot of men communicate more with their secretary than with their spouse.

All of us have 168 hours a week to invest. Take 50 or so hours off the top for sleep time (it's hard to communicate when sleeping). Take 40-70 hours for the job. Then throw in the other factors that call for your time--your children, church, ministry, leisure, community service. And here's the problem. Most men give their wives what's left.

Listen. Getting to know our wives doesn't just happen. It's not easy. It's not natural. But with God's help, it's possible. Men, we need to make a choice. We need to get in line with God's Word and make our marriage relationship the priority God intended it to be, to the honor of Christ. We need to choose to observe and communicate with our wives.

Wives, you need to know this is extremely difficult for your man. So encourage him as he tries to improve.

Challenge: I would ask men to initiate 2 things...

1. Spend 15 minutes a day just talking with your spouse (try not to talk about the job or the kids!)
2. Ask your wife the questions on the back of the outline.

Tran: There's task #1: Know your wife.

II. Task #2: Honor your wife.

V 7 "Giving honor unto the wife"

Q: What does it mean to honor your wife?

Illust: Don't be like the brothers in the story I heard. One died...

Q: Why should a husband honor his wife? Notice two reasons mentioned...

A. The Physical Reason

V 7 "as unto the weaker vessel"

As I mentioned last week, women in the ancient world were viewed as objects. It was not, and still is not, an uncommon sight in the Eastern culture to see a man riding a donkey, with a woman trudging alongside on foot. The world of Peter's day had a low view of women. In fact women were segregated in worship services, by both Roman and Jewish practice.

Christianity introduced a radical change. Christianity asserted that women have value, in fact, equal value in God's sight. Through Jesus Christ, every person can be right with God, whether free man or slave, whether Jew or Gentile, whether man or woman (Gal 3:28).

Q: How should a follower of Christ view his wife?

A: He should honor her.

What's that mean? Giving honor unto the wife does not mean giving "in" to the wife. A husband can disagree with his wife and still respect and honor her. In fact, men, as the spiritual leader in the home, we may at times have to make decisions that are not popular. But even then, we can still be courteous. To honor means to respect.

When Peter says that the wife is the "weaker vessel," he doesn't mean she's inferior mentally, or morally, or spiritually. He has in mind the physical differences. Granted there are exceptions. But generally the man is the stronger of the 2 physically.

Illust:

A husband should honor his wife for a physical reason. Secondly...

B. The Spiritual Reasons

I want you to take a close look at 2 phrases.

V 7 "as being heirs together of the grace of life"

V 7 "that your prayers be not hindered"

I think Peter assumes that married couples will pray together. Do you? What a privilege for 2 people who are "heirs together of the grace of life" to go before the throne of grace.

Q: Why is it so important for a husband to honor his wife?

A: Listen carefully. Do you know what happens when you DON'T honor your wife? Peter says you hinder your fellowship with God.

**Think about it: Your relationship with your spouse affects your relationship with God.

Two important related texts:

Ps 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Which says when applied to your marriage, "If I don't honor my wife the Lord will not hear me."

The other text is one that every married couple needs to know and practice. Eph 4:26 "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Listen. You can't afford to go to bed when there's hostility between you and your spouse. Get it resolved. Because to be out of sorts with my wife is to be out of sorts with God.

Conclusion:

Last month I read Lyle Dorsett's biography of Billy Sunday. Billy Sunday, a converted major league baseball player, was one of the greatest evangelists who ever walked the face of this earth. He preached to over 100 million people by the end of his career in 1935. From 1908 to 1920 he preached in 68 different cities in the USA. In 1914 Billy made #8 on "American Magazines" greatest men in America. Billy Sunday was a household name.

But sadly, as so often is the case, while Billy prospered in the pulpit, he struggled in the home. His vigorous schedule demanded that he and his wife Nell be gone the majority of the time. They had 4 children. A live-in nanny basically raised the children. Of the 4 children, 3 of them were problem-makers and misfits. Only their oldest daughter Helen served Christ faithfully to the end. The other 3, all boys, brought great heartache to Billy. George, Paul, and Willie embarrassed and grieved their parents greatly.

I read about one specific occasion that really tugged at my heart. In 1933, Billy's oldest son George took a number of risky real estate ventures in San Francisco. They failed and left him penniless. His parents bailed him out by sending him thousands of dollars. He blew that too. Finally George took his own life, and left behind a destitute family and a pile of debts.

When Billy heard about the tragedy, he stood gazing out the window of their Winona Lake home. With a broken heart, and tear-filled eyes, he turned to his wife Nell and said, "Ma, where did I go wrong? I thought we heard God's call to evangelism. But look at our boys. Where did I go wrong?" (132)

Men, let's be honest with each other. This is serious. Do you want to be a husband that pleases God. If you do, you have 2 tasks: Know your wife. And honor your wife.

How are you doing? How well do you know your wife? Do you respect her? How do you talk to her? Do you yell at her? Do you jab her with critical barbs? Or do you view your wife as a gift from God? Do you picture her as a precious, fragile vase, which you must protect and care for?

Objection: "You don't know my wife. She nags me. In fact, to be honest I don't have any feelings for her. So why should I honor her?"

Illust:

Q: Let me ask you, Do you see any where in v 7 where Peter says, "Husbands, know your wife and honor your wife...if you have feelings for her."

Q: Does obedience to v 7 depend on feelings?

A: No. In fact, I guarantee you. If we practice the counsel of v 7, if we make it a priority to know and honor our wives, the feelings will come.

Challenge: I want to ask every married person her today to make a commitment. Not to me, but to God. "Heavenly Father, I belong to you because Christ saved me. Today I am choosing to obey Your Word. I want You to be pleased with my marriage. I am willing to take whatever steps are needed so You will be pleased..."