

**HOLY HUSBANDS**

1 Peter 3:7

**Scripture Reading:** Ephesians 5:15-33.

**Intro:** When we compare what Peter had to say to husbands with what the Apostle Paul had to say, especially in his epistle to the Ephesians, Peter was very brief. That is probably to be explained by the fact that he was not trying to treat the subject of husbands in a thorough manner, but because he was writing to meet specific needs. That is generally true about the writing of all of the NT epistles – they were written to meet specific needs. What they were in the case of Peter’s epistle, we can’t really say, but it would appear that the wives were having trouble with submission to their husbands, and so Peter wrote as he did. In the case of the husbands it seems that they generally had not been treating their wives with the love and respect that they should have been treating them. And that which it was costing the husbands was a lack of effectiveness in prayer. All that Peter said in this verse was leading up to the last phrase of the verse, “that your prayers be not hindered.”

Both in the writings of Peter and the writings of Paul it is apparent that the praying of *men* was especially important. For example, Paul told Timothy, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:8). We can’t have holy hands unless we are holy, and we can’t be truly holy unless we are living holy lives. Long before Peter and Paul lived, one of the Psalmists wrote, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psa. 66:18). To “regard iniquity” is to know that it is there, but to refuse to do anything about it. A wife is regarding her own iniquity if she refuses to be submissive to her husband, and a husband is regarding iniquity in his heart when he fails to show true love for his wife. It is the will of God for all of us to be holy, but it is only HOLY HUSBANDS are husbands who are pleasing to the Lord. And to be holy they must not just profess to be holy in name, but they must be holy in practice.

This is not just true of husbands, but it is true of all believers. Sin is the great hindrance to prayer, the cause of much unanswered prayer. This is true of each of us individually, but, since a married couple is really “one flesh,” it is especially true of a husband and wife. We all love to see answers to prayer. It is obviously God’s intention to answer our prayers, but if we are to expect answers, things must be right between a husband and his wife.

Now from the husband’s standpoint, our text tells us how that is to be

accomplished. And so I want to take each part of this verse, examine each as carefully as I can, trusting the Lord to enable us to see from a husband's point-of-view the attitudes and conditions which will make our prayers more effective.

Note with me, if you will,

## **I. THE WORD "LIKEWISE."**

Peter began singling out special groups when in chapter 2, verse 13, he addressed all believers as citizens, or at least as people who were to be submissive to the government under which they were living. Then in verse 18 of chapter 2 he moved on to servants. When he came to wives in chapter 3, verse 1, he said, "Likewise." He did the same here in verse 7. And he did it a third time in chapter 5, verse 5, when he spoke to the young people.

The word he used could simply be translated as *also*, or *in the same way*. But there is another translation that needs to be emphasized as we move from group to group. And it is this: "*equally*," or "*of equal importance*." It is a word which puts all that the Apostle Peter had to say *on the same level*. The Apostle Peter did not mention wives first and say the most to them because they were the main problem. Nor did he mention husbands second in the use of this word because he was singling them out as the chief offenders. *But he was saying that the instructions given to each group were of equal importance, and that there could not be true harmony among believers until each one not only knew what he or she should do, but that each one was intent on doing the will of God.*

A husband and a wife have different responsibilities, and there are many ways in which a husband and wife are different, but what they are to do is of equal importance in the sight of God, and in the making of a happy marriage, a married in which they enjoy the blessing of the Lord. So a wife needs to be thoroughly familiar with the first six verses, and do what they say, but it is just as important for a husband to be thoroughly acquainted with verse 7, and to do as this verse says. I hope we all get the point of this simple but very important word, "Likewise."

But what did the Apostle Peter say to the husbands? The first was this:

## **II. "DWELL WITH THEM ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE."**

One very obvious meaning of this statement is that a husband and wife are to live together. They are to have their own dwelling place. It was said in the very beginning when the Lord God made Eve and brought her to

Adam that

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

But it needs to be said in our day that a man and a woman should not live together until they are legally husband and wife. Regardless of what they might say about their relationship, if they are not married according to the laws of the government under which they live, it is not marriage, but it is adultery. And instead of having the blessing of the Lord, they will face the judgment of the Lord. We may think that times change, but they don't change that much so that it is right to undo what God has done. And let us all be sure that we know this.

But let me get back to the words of our text. A husband and wife need to live together. They need to be together. It is never a healthy thing for a man to live in one place for a long period of time, and for his wife to live in another place. Abraham and Sarah lived in the same tent. The same was true of Isaac and Rebekah. Unfortunately not all marriages in Bible times followed the divine pattern, but this was God's plan.

And perhaps the reason that this is emphasized with the husband is because it is more likely that the husband will become an absentee husband and father than that it would be true of the wife. But in modern America where women are out in the workplace, it is possible for the wife to be absent from the home. The husband goes to work, but he needs to come back home at night to be with his wife and family, and to carry one his responsibilities as a husband and father. Sometimes when a move is necessary from one city to another, a separation is unavoidable for a time. But even then it needs to be cut short as soon as possible. "Husbands, dwell with them." Don't leave the home and the children to your wife, but make sure that you both call the same place "home"! Even be careful that recreation does not take you away too often and for too long a time from your wife, and, when children come along, from your children. "Husbands, dwell with them."

But what did Peter mean when he said, "according to knowledge"?

In its context this would mean, *according to his knowledge of God and of the Word of God*. Do you remember what the Apostle Paul told wives to do when they wanted to know the truth? You will find his words in 1 Cor. 14:35. Just reading a part of the verse, he said this: "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home."

In the first place, every husband should get his understanding of what a

home and a family are to be, not from the current trend in the world, but *from the Word of God!* A husband is to be his wife's primary teacher. And if a husband is to fulfill that role, he must be a diligent student of the Word of God.

But it is not just enough to *know* what the Bible says, but knowledge in Scripture always includes the personal application of the Word in daily life. It means, as James taught us, being *a doer of the Word, and not just a hearer*. *How fortunate a wife is if she has a husband who is constantly learning more about the Word, and who is living according to what he knows. And how fortunate children are to have such a family.* Husbands, if you want to ruin your marriage and your family, then follow the ways of the world. But if you want your marriage to be enduring, and your love for your wife to grow with the years, and if you want your children to come to the Lord and to walk with the Lord, then get your knowledge of what life is supposed to be from the Word of God.

But this is not all that Peter said to the husbands. He continued with

### **III. "GIVING HONOR UNTO THE WIFE, AS UNTO THE WEAKER VESSEL."**

According to the fifth commandment which the Apostle Paul repeated for children (see Eph. 6:2-3), children are to learn to honor their parents so that when the sons grow up and become husbands, they will know what it means to honor their wives. It is the same idea.

For children as they grow up, there are no people on earth who are more important to them than their parents. And when a son grows up and becomes an adult, and gets married, there is no one more important to him, no one who is as dear to him, as that person who has become his wife. And so he is to treat her as his dearest treasure. He is always to love her, to show her the greatest respect, never to injure her, but always to take the greatest delight in meeting her every need. And the Bible says, which means that God says, she is "the weaker vessel." This means that she is always going to need his help and his protection. He is to take care of her like her parents used to take care of her. This does not mean that she is weaker in intelligence, nor that she is weaker in morality. Our wives often excel us in both of these areas, but she is weaker physically, and often emotionally. Read Proverbs 31 and you will see that a wife can be a great source of strength to her husband, and most of us know this from personal experience. God brings two people together because the man needs a wife and a woman needs a husband. And really tragic results can take place when we step out of the role which God has ordained for us.

Let me say, by the way, that I doubt very much, from what I know of the Scriptures, if it is God's will for a woman to be driving around in a police car, with a gun at her side, to face whatever criminal she might have to face all by herself. And I doubt if it is the will of God for us to be sending women into combat as soldiers on the ground, or as pilots of a fighter plane, or as a part of a crew on a warship. There are ways in which we are equal, but not physically, and not emotionally. And the way men and women are thrown together in the business world has been a powerful in the break up of many homes.

Ladies, let me plead with you not to argue with the Word of God on this point. The more our nation opposes what God has said in His Word, the more corrupt our society becomes, and the faster we will move toward the greater judgment of God.

Husbands, let us honor our wives. Let us treat them as our superiors, and thank God every day that He has blessed us so richly in giving us the one you call your wife, and I call my wife.

But Peter still is not finished. Next he spoke of the way in which we are equal.

#### **IV. "AS BEING HEIRS TOGETHER OF THE GRACE OF LIFE."**

This verse gets better and better, doesn't it?

This expression "heirs together," is the same expression that is used three other times in the NT, and only three other times. Let me read them to you.

The first is in Rom. 8:16-17:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The second is in Eph. 3:6:

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The third is in Heb. 11:9. Referring to Abraham, we read,

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

“Heirs together” means *joint heirs*. All of us who know the Lord are Joint heirs with Christ. We all have the same inheritance with Christ. The saved Gentiles have the same inheritance as saved Jews. And Isaac and Jacob had the same inheritance as Abraham. And since husbands and wives are “heirs together of the grace of life,” this means that all that a saved husband has in Christ, is exactly what his saved wife has. This is where we as husbands and wives who know the Lord, are exactly the same. A husband has no more than his wife, and a wife has no more than her husband. And the hope that a husband has is exactly the same hope that a wife has – to be with the Lord and to be like the Lord for all eternity.

Don’t you like that expression, “the grace of life”? We got it by grace. We keep it by grace. And that same wonderful grace assures us of the fulfillment of every promise that God has given to His people. And it is by that grace that we live together as husbands and wives, and it is by that grace that we love each other and walk with the same Savior.

The vow which many of us have taken when we got married says that we take each other “to love and to cherish, for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death us do part.” And we never know what is ahead of us. But what we do know is that we have a life from God and in God which is characterized by grace. It is “the grace of life.” And God’s grace is sufficient for whatever may come. And that which a husband has in Christ is no more, no less, and nothing else, but what his wife also has in Christ. We are “heirs together of the grace of life.”

One writer has expressed it this way:

The Christian husband, when he realizes these truths, cannot but honor his partner; cannot but treat her with cordial respect, as one, equally with himself, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; already blessed with many invaluable heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ, standing in a most dignified relation to the great God our Savior; already animated by His spirit and adorned by His image, and destined to be one day perfectly like Him, their common life, when He appears in His glory (Brown, John, *Expository Discourses on 1 Peter*, Vol. I, p. 574).

Finally, we come to:

## **V. THE BLESSED OBJECTIVE: “THAT YOUR PRAYERS BE NOT HINDERED.”**

A husband prays alone, and a wife prays alone. It is a characteristics of all true believers that they pray. But here the Apostle spoke of “your prayers,” plural, family prayers. A husband’s proper relationship with his wife, helps his prayers, and his prayers make his relationship with his wife better and better.

The word “hindered” means *to be cut off*, or *to be cut into*. There is an obstacle in the way that keeps our prayers from being heard, and if they are not heard, they are not answered.

Quoting the same writer I quoted a moment ago, this is what he had to say on this point:

Let, then, Christian husbands, and wives too, guard against every things which may hinder family prayer. Let their whole conduct toward each other look back and forward to the family altar. Let it be consistent with devotion, preparatory to it, indicative of its influence. Avoid whatever makes an introduction into the Divine presence less easy or less delightful. Keep open a passage wide enough to advance together to the throne of grace: go hand in hand (*Op. cit.*, p. 576).

**Concl:** But perhaps the Apostle Peter’s main point in this last statement was to husbands, and that he had them in mind when he said “your prayers.” It is true that wives also are responsible for seeking God’s blessing as they pray with their husbands, and alone by themselves. But there is a particular need for every believing husband to make sure that the Lord’s blessing is not withheld because of his failure to live according to what Peter has said to all Christian husbands in this verse. Another writer has said,

So concerned is God that Christian husbands live in a loving and understanding way with their wives, that He ‘interrupts’ His relationship with them [the husbands] when they are not doing so. No Christian husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. And no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife “in an understanding way, bestowing honor” upon her (Grudem, Wayne, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1 Peter*, p. 146).

Whatever may be the condition of our relationship with our wives, let us seek by God’s grace that any wrongs may be made right, that what is good may become the best that the Lord intended that it should be.

Even any marriage that is happy without Christ can be infinitely happier

with Christ, since a godly life not only holds great promise for the life that now is, but what is even more important, of the life that is to come. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:8.