

# GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN:

## IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

### CLASS 8: WHAT ARE SOME PRIORITIES OF A HUSBAND WITH HIS WIFE?

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
  - January 5<sup>th</sup>: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
  - January 12<sup>th</sup>: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
  - January 19<sup>th</sup>: What are the priorities of parents?
  - January 26<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
  - February 2<sup>nd</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the church?
  - February 9<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
  - February 16<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
  - **February 23<sup>rd</sup>: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?**

## INTRODUCTION

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- “Men feel under great pressure at times as providers and leaders. Without God, living out all their roles adequately, or even with excellence, is virtually impossible. It’s a high calling to be ultimately held accountable for all that occurs in their family (and in the case of elders, the church).”<sup>1</sup>
- Because of this high responsibility placed upon men, especially husbands, we are going to take another week and go over how a husband is to be with his wife.
- As the husband does have more responsibility, he is going to be the one who is in charge of the spiritual welfare of his household.
- This is not to say that the wife bears no responsibility, but ultimately it is going to fall upon the shoulders of the husband.
- If he is not dependent upon the Lord and striving to be the man that God has made him to be, this is going to feel like a constant struggle and uphill battle.
- Our hope is that by following what the Scriptures have commanded, we as husbands cannot just survive our marriages, but truly thrive in them. Not just aiming to have peace in the house, but glorifying God in all that we do and speak to one another.

## WHAT DOES 1 PETER 3:7 MEAN?

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- First, this verse is directed to all husbands, not just a select few. In order to lead your wife and live a life which honors and glorifies God, you must follow this exhortation from Peter.
  - You cannot be a husband who just gives up, thinking that you have been exempted from following what Peter says. If you have the Spirit of God living in you, even though it may (will will) be hard at times, you can accomplish what you need to by the power of God.
- Second, we must consider the context in which this verse was written.
- The historical context is one that is unfamiliar to us today.
  - In both the Greek and Jewish culture in Biblical days, women were looked at as less than human.
- We must remember that this is the mindset of men who were being saved and brought into the church.
  - Men are not coming from the world with the mindset of trying to understand their wives. This is why it is important that they learn these things in the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 275.

## Part 1: You husbands in the same way...

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- We want to pick apart this verse and find out exactly what Peter wants us, as husbands, to know.
- Since this is *the* verse to husbands from Peter and the only one which is structured this way, we should glean from it all that we can.
- Starting back on 2:12 “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
- It is from this verse that Peter launches into a fairly comprehensive list of how the believer is to act in a hostile society against Christianity.
- “The motivation for all of Peter’s exhortations is clearly to bring glory to God before a watching world. Husbands are to honor God in the face of difficulty because it ‘finds favor with God’ (vv. 9-20).”<sup>2</sup>
  - Husbands, the world is watching you and how you treat your wife, especially when there are hard times and trials upon you.
  - Just because you are facing a difficult situation does not mean that you are now allowed to treat your wives like garbage. It is in the difficult times that our hearts are going to be truly manifested.
- There are differing thoughts as to what “in the same way” means.
- It can refer to the duty of submission, referring back chiefly to 2:13 where Peter calls all people to submit for the Lord’s sake to every human institution.
  - He then talks about slaves being submissive to their own masters (2:18).
- Then in 3:1 he talks about wives being submissive to their own husbands, even the unsaved and harsh ones.
- He then uses the same language in 3:7, seemingly referring back to the theme of submission.
- As MacArthur states “In the same way refers again to the duty of submission. This time it is the believing husband who submits to serve his wife. Husbands obey that duty by adhering to three basic responsibilities in caring for their wives needs: consideration, chivalry, and companionship.”<sup>3</sup>
- But is Peter talking about a husband submitting to his wife, as MacArthur states?
- This would mean that there is a *mutual submission* which is taking place as the husband and wife both are submitting to each other in the marriage.
- Is this what Peter had in mind as he was writing to husbands?
- “The words “in the same way” (homoiōs) do not suggest that husbands are to submit to wives, as people submit to rulers (2:13), slaves to masters (2:18), and wives to husbands (3:1). The connective is loose,

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<sup>2</sup> Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband A Biblical Perspective* rev. ed., (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), 197.

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, *1 Peter The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2004) 181.

indicating that a new group is addressed. The New Testament nowhere counsel's husbands to submit to wives, and such an idea is not implied here. Instead, husbands are to (literally) "live together with them according to knowledge."<sup>4</sup>

- What are we to think about submission and the husband and wife's relationship?
- As was stated, there is no place in the Scriptures where a husband is called to submit to his wife.
- Does this mean that the husband is a complete dictator? Of course not, Peter does not just leave us to think that the wife has all the responsibility, and the husband can do what he pleases.
- We will see this as we move forward in this verse.

## **Part 2: ...live with your wives...**

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- I believe that this is a rare use of the imperative participle.<sup>5</sup>
  - Peter is not connecting this participle with any main verb, but it is independent in its usage.
- The reason I think this is important not to miss is because of the exact, inspired word that is used.
- συνοικοῦντες is the participle used and it means *to live with someone* and historically it was only used for a relationship between a man and a woman.<sup>6</sup>
- As Phillips points out "Most men respond, 'All right, I can check that one off. We live in the same house!' But, of course, that's not Peter's point. Rather, you are to live with your wife. The word for "live with" is the Greek word that means "commune" and gives us the noun community. Peter is saying that husbands are to live with their wives in a single shared life."<sup>7</sup>
- This all means that as a couple you are to spend time together and live with one another as one flesh.
- The obvious advantage to what Peter is saying here is that a husband who lives with this type of interest and intimacy with his wife, is far better suited to minister to her needs.
- Also, to live with your wife is to take interest in the things that she has interests in and to put your own desires second as you live with her.
- In an era of "man-caves," husbands need to prioritize time with their wives so that they can fulfill the rest of what Peter exhorts them in.

## **Part 3: ...in an understanding way...**

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- This is literally just two words in the Greek, κατὰ γνῶσιν, according to or with knowledge.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 159.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 650-651.

<sup>6</sup> "Blue Letter Bible" συνοικέω, n.d., <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4924/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate God's Calling to Men*, (Sanford, FL: Ligonier, 2010), 114.

- This is where we get the idea of the husband must be a learner of his wife. How do we gain knowledge of any subject that interests us? We must go and gain knowledge, or in other words, we must learn about it.
- I think it is important to point out that husbands are not to be learners of *women* but of their own wives. Men, we are not called to figure out the female gender, but put our energy and effort into the lifelong pursuit of learning our own, God given wives.
- The preposition *with* or *according to* tells us the “how.” How are we to live with our wives? It is in an understanding way.
- So, we have the imperative, or command, to live in close communion with our wives. We are to make sure that we are intimately involved in their lives.
- Now we have the how, not just the what.
- Once again, there are a few differing views on how this is to be taken and I think they are worth noting.
- As Scott says, “This knowledge can be anything from the knowledge of one’s wife to the knowledge of all Christians principles. The idea here is that a husband must live with his wife *in accordance with the things he should know.*”<sup>8</sup>
- As Philipps further points out, “This passage contains one of my main Bible-translation points of frustration. The original text does not say men are merely to “be understanding” or, as the NIV puts it, to live “with consideration.” Peter is not merely telling husbands to put the toilet seat down (although that is not a bad idea). The Greek text actually says that husbands must live with their wives “according to knowledge.” In other words, a husband must know what is going on with his wife.”<sup>9</sup>
- Peter seems to be making the point that if we do not know what God desires for us as husbands, we are not going to know how we are to relate to our own wives.
- As you are dwelling intimately with your own wife, you should be getting to know the Lord’s will and her deepest needs.
- That means you should know the simple things like her daily schedule.
- What things does she have to do throughout the day to keep the house up and running?
- Why does that matter?
  - You do not want to overburden her with unrealistic tasks, so you know what she’s doing.
- It goes from the simple to the spiritual. As you are dwelling with her and learning about her, you should know the spiritual state of her heart.

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<sup>8</sup> Scott, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Phillipps, 114.

- Where are areas that she needs your prayer and support? Where are areas that she is struggling with emotionally or spiritually?
- How can you lift her up in the ministry of prayer and the Word?
- You cannot know these things if you do not know your own wife.
- Some wives like to be motivated by goals and things they can attain.
- Others will crumble under pressure and need to be nurtured more to keep moving forward.
- I would submit that if your marriage is at a standstill, it is precisely because you have not taken the time to learn about your wife.
- As a leader, you are just moving forward without any consideration for those who are following you. That is not so much a leader as it is a dictator. If you expect your wife to simply follow you because you are her husband, then you have neither knowledge of the Lord's commands or of your wife's own needs.
- I like how Scott (pp. 198-99) contrasts this Biblical idea of understanding with how the world or our current culture may define it.
- While we need to be compassionate and sensitive to our wives, those are just reactions to what we think she may need. That is not gaining an understanding of our wives.
- It is from our understanding of what God desires us to do and what our wife needs that we can have compassion on her. But we show our compassion and sensitivity towards her by our actions that she needs at the time.

#### **Part 4: ...as with someone weaker, as she is a woman...**

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- The verse literally reads *as a weaker vessel*.
- The word *as* is a conjunction, Peter is comparing something for our own benefit. He is comparing women in general to a man and using the illustration of a vessel.
  - On a side note, there is nothing inherently feminine about this vessel, it is also used of men throughout the NT. It is just the illustration that Peter used as his readers would have known exactly what he was talking about.
- Since this is a comparative conjunction (using like or as), he is saying that men are stronger, and women are weaker. But how does this fit into the context? In other words, why did Peter say this right now?
- Personally, I think that since we have a comparative clause (like or as) right after *in an understanding way*, it is best to take it as it flows in the passage.
- Men, we are to live with our wives in an understanding way since she is like a weaker vessel.

- So how can we view this weaker vessel in the context here? There really is only one literal meaning to the text here. Peter has in his mind that the women generally possess less physical strength than men and they need to be treated with “gentleness and sensitivity.”<sup>10</sup>
- He is directing his attention to what is uniquely feminine about women in general. This shows that men must learn their wife, they need this knowledge in order to properly love and lead them.
- We are to dwell with our wives according to understanding as they are weaker. If we take this to mean the physical differences between men and women, the application is much more relevant.
- As a leader, you will not expect your wife to do things that she is not physically capable of doing. This means that as a man, you have designated jobs that you must do, because you are a man.
- A way to love your wife is to make sure that, as you understand her, you are keeping up the things that you are to do so that you show understanding that your wife is a weaker vessel.
- As you are intimately dwelling with her, learning her, you are going to learn the things that she can and cannot do. Then you are going to lead her accordingly.

### **Part 5: ...and show her honor as a fellow heir of grace...**

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- “The word for "showing honor" might be better rendered as "cherishing" her (the Greek word here, τιμήν, is used for assigning a high price to objects in the market). A husband is to convey to his wife that he values her greatly, that she is precious to him.”<sup>11</sup>
- **While Peter uses this word as a noun, it is describing how husbands are to manifest their knowledge of their wives. It is to be done with honor. You are to esteem your wife as precious in your sight.**
- Honoring your wife means that you treat her with excellence, from the day you are married until the day the Lord calls one of you home.
- How do you honor your wife practically, “...showing honor means that our dirty laundry stays hidden in the closet. Rather than broadcast faults, irritations, or areas of immaturity to others, a godly husband will choose to handle those matters behind closed doors.”<sup>12</sup>
- His point is that you have intimate knowledge about your wife. You are getting to know her; you are seeing her strengths and weaknesses. What you do with that information will prove how much you honor her.
- To truly honor your wife is not just hiding the negatives but it is actively sharing the positives.
- Practically, when someone you know meets your wife for the first time, are they going to think that she is the worse person on the planet or someone who you hold in the highest esteem?
- Your words are going to be a window into your own heart about your wife.

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<sup>10</sup> Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman*, 246-247.

<sup>11</sup> Phillips, 116.

<sup>12</sup> Rob Green, *Tying the Knot*, (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 61.

- Peter then grounds the husband's mandate to show the wife honor in the fact that she is a fellow heir of the grace of life.
- The language of *fellow heir* means that there must be an inheritance. If there is an inheritance, then there must be something takes place in the future.
- The word συγκληρονόμοις literally means *inheriting together with* or *co-heirs*.
- The word is used in **Hebrews 11:9** “By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, **fellow heirs of the same promise...**”
  - It is also used in **Romans 8:17** and **Ephesians 3:6**, all with the same idea of inheriting the eternal life which awaits believers.
- One of the ways this section can be read, which may make it easier to understand is, *because your wife is a Christian and will inherit eternal life, you must show her honor.*
- I really like that Peter put this in here. I think we often times forget that our believing spouses are also born again and children of God.
- This means that we must firstly treat them as fellow believers, those for whom Christ died. Then, as husbands, we have more responsibility to our wives. We must not just treat them fellow believers, but since we are married, we must treat them as our wives.
- There is a general sense that all believers are to show one another love, compassion, honor and so on. But not every man is to lead every woman. Not every woman is to submit to every man. The kind of love and closeness that Peter is talking about goes beyond the normal Christian relationship.
- This is the duty and responsibility of every husband.

### **...so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

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- How do we know that this submission to the Lord and to our wives pleases the Lord? We have the purpose statement right here. Husbands are to be this way so that the Lord will hear them.
- The most important lifeline in your marriage is your communion with God. If that communication is off, then your entire life and marriage will suffer.
- The negative is just as true as the stated positive. If the husband is not treating his wife like this, then the Lord will not hear his prayers. The vertical relationship is going to be non-existent.
- The Lord will cut off communication with any husband who is not following the exhortations which are laid out in this verse.
- Men, these are serious words, and the weight of this warning should not just pass through our ears. If you are to know the Lord's commands so that you can properly love, lead and learn your wife, you must be in constant communion with God.



- If you are not living with your wife in an understanding way, then there is no way you have a close walk with the Lord. The reason? You are living in sin.
- God does not bless with his favor those who are in positions of authority and abuse those who are under them by mistreating them.”<sup>13</sup>
- You and I are not perfect. We can never treat our wives with the same perfection that Christ treats His church, but we are called to strive for that end.
- How is it that we can make sure that we are not the cause of hindered prayers and an unloving attitude?
- Dwell with your wife, intimately. Not just sharing the same room or house together but making sure that you are around her with purpose.
- Let her know what you think about her and how you value her and what she does.
- Be quick to die to your own desires and strive to find ways to honor her.
- Be quick to repent and equally swift to forgive. Make sure that there is nothing between you and your wife on a daily basis. Keep the air clear from all distractions.
- Most of all, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Seek first the kingdom of God. Know what the Lord desires and then you will know how best to love your wife.

## **CONCLUSION**

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- Simply put, husbands have a high calling and responsibility to not just occupy the same space with their wives but to learn all about them. The goal is not for a happy and peaceful house (though that may be the case), the goal is to glorify God and honor your wife.
- Husbands are not perfect, but they can strive through the power of God to live out their mandate.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

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- Men, how have you put your own desires, hobbies or interests on hold to better learn and serve your wife?
- Are there any issues between you and your wife that you are not working through, just hoping they will sort themselves out? Do you know the potential consequences of this?

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<sup>13</sup>Schreiner, 161.