

The Biblical Roles of a Husband (part 2) (1 Pet. 3:7; Gen. 1-2)

1. Husband, Learn Your Wife. Turn to 1 Pet. 3:7: “**Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**” We will come back to this passage next week as there is lot of truth here. But for now, husbands, notice this command: “*live with your wives in an understanding way.*” Now, this text does not teach us that husbands are smarter than their wives. I know, just looking at all of you this morning, this is CERTAINLY not the case. This text, ultimately isn’t about who is smarter, but about biblical roles, biblical responsibilities in marriage in the overall context of authority and submission (see cp. 2:13 ff.) One way of describing the meaning here is to say, “*Husbands, learn your wife.*” “*Understand your wife.*” The more direct translation is “according to knowledge.” We may also say, “*know your wives.*”

We all want to be known and understood. And God is our great example. He is our great husband. David prays, “**Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!**” (Ps. 139:23). And we see the fulfillment of this in the NT as Christ is called the husband of his bride. God does not need to know anything more about us. For He made us; and He is the ONLY one who truly knows the depths of our hearts. But, it is precisely because HE does KNOW us that He lives with us in an understanding way. “**For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust**” (Ps. 103:14). One of the most beautiful truths about the Lord Jesus is that He knows us, and BECAUSE he knows us, he treats us and leads us and loves us in the most beautiful ways.

I think of Peter. He was the FIRST of the apostles. He was the MOST zealous. He was the one who said, “*though they all forsake you, I will not leave you.*” Yet, in the Garden of Gethsemane when the forces of evil came upon the Lord Jesus, Peter ran away just like the rest. And, he didn’t merely run away. He openly, with cursing, denied our Lord. And then, after Jesus rose from the dead, He met his disciples for a fisherman’s breakfast along the shores of the Sea of Tiberius. Think how Peter must have felt. He was embarrassed. He was filled with guilt. He knew how unworthy he was. He wondered how Jesus would respond. Yet, Jesus knew him in an understanding way. Jesus looked into his heart and he KNEW. For HE created him. And he restored Peter with great love and affection (John 21:15-19).

Husbands, live with your wife in an understanding way. Learn her that you may love her. And, she will be more beautiful for your love in this way. So what does this look like practically? This means great time and effort. As we saw last week, husbands, as we love our wives properly, they become more beautiful. If I plant my garden and do not work and tend it with care, I will have very little produce. It's easy to run my tiller through the rows, which will keep a good number of the weeds out. But, I also must hoe around the plants. But, if I really want good results, I must get down on my hands and knees and pull the weeds next to the plant. And then, when needed, I water, I use lime, I scatter fertilizer. Husbands, if there is one area where we cannot afford to be lazy, it is in learning our wives as we love them. Let me continue with some general applications and comments.

One way we learn our wives is by spending quality time together. Let me ask, “**How much time do you actually spend together?**” And here I don't mean family time, but husband and wife time. I don't mean just being together in the same place. I think sometimes a husband's definition of “quality” time and the wife's definition are very different. I can be with Kristen often and think this is good. But, she wants more than this. She wants to connect. She wants to talk at a deeper level. She desires that I give her clear focus and attention. I've discovered that walking together is a good place for this. Personally, if I have an hour or two in the day, I want to work out. But, I have found that it is important to give up that work out for to walk . . . and talk . . . and listen to Kristen. Husbands, if you will learn you wife in a loving way, you must spend clear, focused, attentive time together. Younger married couples with children: I want to encourage you to have couch time together. And when the kids come and demand your attention, tell them “this is mama and daddy time.” (This is actually good for them. For kids are more secure when mama and daddy love each other.)

Application: This is a command for one man to understand one woman, his wife (not women in general). To think someone could actually say, “*I've got women figured out*” is crazy. No, you don't! But, you do need to “figure your wife out.” She must be the one woman you do figure out.

Application: Husbands when you understand your wife you are a better lover of your wife. You are able to live in a more understanding way, a more considerate way. This is love! If you live with your wife, learning her, getting to know her, you show you her you love her. You show her, in a sacrificial way, how important she is to you. When you ask questions about what she really likes, when you spend extra time with her, even as you may sacrifice some of the things you want to do, when you make a great effort to learn her ways, you are being a loving husband. And the goal is not simply to “know her better.” We do this so we might treat our wives as Christ treats us. Also, consider the golden rule? Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Remember from Eph. 5: ***“Husbands love your wives as you love your own bodies.”***

Application: Husbands, in this passage we also see the command to honor your wife. This means to treat your wife with excellence, giving her the greatest place of honor in your heart and in your home and in the world. Husbands, what do you do with the things you prize: the sports item or team, the 20 point buck, the 12 pound fish, the 69 Chevrolet, etc. You place those things where they can be seen by all. And for the car, you have no problem taking your friend or neighbor into the garage. In the same kind of way, we honor our wives. And you know what, your wife has many faults. She is a sinner (just like you). Still, we honor our wives. We do this by speaking well of them in front of the children. We only speak good words about them to our friends and the world. When we are out, we never should find a time to bash our wives (same goes for husbands). Instead, we handle these matter in private, behind closed doors. At the end of the day, honoring hides the bad and displays the good!

Application: This text also teaches that some things hinder our prayers. Very rarely in the Bible do we see such words. Therefore, we must take them seriously.

App. This command is ongoing, no matter how old we are. I think it took me 24 years to realize that washing the dishes doesn't simply mean washing them, and even drying them and putting them away. It means drying and cleaning out the sink. I know this is a small thing, but it is an example of ongoing learning happening in my marriage.

2. Husband, Lead Your Wife. Eph. 5 (from last week) and 1 Pet. 3 are given in the context of authority, particularly the authority of Christ and his rule over all of creation. And ALL of us submit to the authority of Christ. He is our leader. And both Paul and Peter speak from the context of Gen., cps. 1-3, as God created them both male and female in his image, with a clear establishment of authority. Adam was given authority over his wife to lead her. Adam's lack of leadership helped lead to the fall. He stood by as Satan tempted her and we have no record of anything he did to stop her. Husbands, no matter what you do, good or bad, you are leading. You may abdicate as Adam did, but you are still leading. For this is God's ordained way within marriage.

Now, let's be clear about what this does not mean. I do not believe the bible teaches necessarily that men must lead women (in general). Regardless of gender, both men and women can lead a company effectively or be a senator (examples are endless). However, in the marriage, husbands are given the role of leadership. So what does this look like? The Bible is very clear. Look with me to Matt. 20:25-28: **“But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** Brothers and sisters, we must begin all discussions of leadership with the example of Christ.

Look at Phil. 2:5-8: **“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”** Brothers and sisters, there is NO ONE in the universe who serves with both heart and deed than God incarnate, the Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ. GOD IS LOVE! And the greatest way He shows his love is in the giving of the Son to serve. Oh the great mystery here! Christ is our example! HE is the ONE with the greatest authority, greatest position, greatest power. Yet, he chooses to take on flesh and live as we live, and even die as we die. But we know death could not hold him. He rose again. But concerning his humility in the incarnation and the cross, there is no greater example of leadership. And this responsibility is given to the husband. The greatest leader is the greatest servant. We mostly lead our wives when we become the servant. In this regard we become the “least” and the “last.” For the last shall be first and the greatest among you will be the least.

So what does this look practically? The first thing that comes to mind is serving physically. Husbands, consider all the things your wife has on her plate and make it your aim to help her physically. Do the little things around the house (without being told). Ask her how you can help her? And in serving her, don't expect anything in return. When you do these things, you become a good leader. The applications are endless. Now, let me follow with some practical ways we serve our wives in leadership.

Christian husband, lead your wife to Christ. Make it the aim of your life in your relationship with your wife, that you might lead her to Christ. Now, I am speaking primarily to Christians this morning. I do not mean here that your wife is not a Christian. What I mean husbands, is that you should do everything in your means to show her Christ. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. To the Christian husband, Christ is your greatest love and desire. As you are fed from Christ, so should you desire that of your wife (and family). This means Christ must be the greatest love of your life, the greatest beauty in your life. This means you should always look to your relationship with Christ first. Then, your acts of love will flow down to your wife from the right motive. When this happens, you are able to truly lead your wife. Everything flows from this truth! This is what I pray for myself and all of you.

Husband, also lead your wife to Christ through the Word of God. Spend time reading with her. Spend time praying with her. It can be as simple as Lord, help us in our marriage. Or *"help us today, love one another. Give us grace to make disciples today"* (and so on).

Husband, Lead your wife in morality. In the way you live your life, take the high ground. Always, by the grace of God, make your best effort to do what is right. Tell the truth to your wife. Do not be lazy. Keep yourself pure from sexual sins. On and on I could go! But, we must lead our wives.

Over the past few weeks, I've thought a lot about how you are hearing these sermons. From one perspective, I don't want you to think I am singling anyone out. Given, some husbands are more like Christ in their example and their ways toward their wives. However, as Christian husbands, we are all being sanctified. Every husband here should be convicted. I promise you are not the only one. You may think Pastor Jon has it all together. Well, I don't. I've been more convicted in this area than I may have ever been since being a pastor at Grace. But, this is a good thing! After all, which Christian does not want to be like his Lord? Which of you does not desire to be like Jesus? Of course you do! This is what the Holy Spirit does in us! This is the will of God: your sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3). And if this is not your desire, then I question if you have the Holy Spirit, if you really are a Christian. No matter who I am preaching to, the Word of God has its effect!

With this in mind, I would urge you to "little by little" by the grace of God given in your life, that you begin to put some of these applications into practice. If you don't know what to do, come see me. Come see one of the elders. Reach out to another husband whom you respect and ask them for help. Read a good book; we have a few on our table, and I can order more. Pray! Seek! Read the Scriptures! Do everything you can to love, to learn, and lead your wife.