

Introduction: In these studies, we are going beyond what a man is to be "as an ordinary Christian." The ordinary things of being a man of prayer, a man of the Word, a worshiper in all of life, and diligent in his vocation. These are things in addition to those general responsibilities to those things peculiar to his role as a husband (and father). We look this morning

I. THE TWO-FOLD ESSENCE OF THE COMMAND

A. Dwell With Them

- This is the heart of the first part of the command (Gk. sunoikeo) "to conduct oneself in relation to a person with whom one lives" (Louw-Nida) "live with" (Friberg).
- The command is to live together as opposed to NOT living together. This is one of the reasons that, unless there is fear of physical danger, I do not counsel "short term separation."
- But it goes beyond that, meaning more than just living under the same roof with your stuff in the same place. The idea of dwelling with someone includes relationship and time. When marriage begins, there is often a struggle of transition in regards to the "friend time."
- This is not the two-fold division of man in the world woman at home. It is to dwell with her, and her primary place of labor is in the home. While not excluding (as we will see) times being out together, the home is to be a place where they dwell and function as a couple.
- A man should take serious consideration about his vocation in relation to this. He needs to ask questions about this, like will he be gone for long periods of time? This is also true in regards to work schedules, with late nights, weekends, etc. While there are some things that are necessary in this way (i.e. military), he should seriously consider the commitments to his vocation for the sake of his wife (and children).
- This can be an issue of particular struggle when a husband is unhappy at home. Perhaps it is his wife (Prov21:9 19), the children, or simply his own selfishness. He can begin to find reasons to pursue time "with the boys", work associates, work itself, hobbies, even the church, or be absorbed in books, TV, movies. Internet. These things can have their place, but they can also be abused.
- Not only is he to be "at home", but also mentally engaged while at home. Being under the same roof is not enough.
- Peter goes on to add a particular about how to do this, **With understanding** (Gk. kata gnosis) = according to knowledge. This word is a word that indicates knowledge, intelligence, the content of knowledge.

The "knowledge" Peter intends here may include any knowledge that would be beneficial to the husband-wife relationship: knowledge of God's purposes and principles for marriage; knowledge of her wife's desires, goals, and frustrations; knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses in the physical, emotional and spiritual realms; etc. A husband who lives according to such knowledge will greatly enrich his marriage relationship-yet such knowledge can only be gained through regular study of God's Word and regular, unhurried times of private fellowship together as husband and wife. (Grudem)

- The first book to be read to understand the wife is the Bible. This tells us how God created the woman, and how she is to be treated.
- The second book: her own heart. She is not a generic woman, but a very specific and unique creature made in God's image.
- **As to the weaker vessel**, (Gk. asthenese = sick, weak, delicate, helpless). The word, a comparative, probably implies that both are recognized as weak (2Corinthians 4:7) and in need of one another's assistance, but that she is relatively weaker. How you think of this word could significantly change attitude. This is not looking down on, but recognition of how God has made and desire to help and protect and treat with dignity. Ming dynasty vase, with careful upkeep and care.

Hindrances to This Learning

- 1.) Fear – of embarrassment, rejection, thing used against her to belittle.
 - 2.) Selfishness – Sometimes connected to fear, at other times selfishness.
 - 3.) Pride – Unwillingness to let out what we really are.
 - 4.) Laziness – It is just too much work.
 - 5.) Ignorance – Assumes she is self-maintaining. Probably lacked example of a father like this, who was proactive in caring for the mom.
- This is to be done with the recognition that she (like all people) are "dynamic", ever changing and developing and influenced by their experiences and thinking. Therefore, to obey this command it is to become a lifelong student of your wife.
 - The husband is to encourage her to willingly give self-revelation by doing so himself.

- God has given me this particular woman to husband, to present to Him (Eph5:26-28). How can I do that? How do I minister to her with all of her particular struggles, experiences, etc. What am I to teach her, how am I to encourage her? To learn to praise and encourage her, not criticize and cut down. Tended like a garden.
- Even when there is correction, it is done in wisdom (Prov25:12)

B. Give Honor

- **As giving honor** (Gk. aomeno = assign to something deserved; Gk. timay = honor, respect, recognition, price, value) **to the wife**. Regardless of what a man finds in his seeking to know her, there is the additional responsibility to seek to honor her.
- **As being heirs together of the grace of life.** (Romans 8:17) A recognition that when she is a believer, there is a love and respect not only wife, but as a sister in Christ. Are there certain ways that I speak to my wife that I would never speak to another sister in Christ? Do I treat her with contempt and indignity simply because of us being in closer proximity?
- 1Corinthians 7:3 Mutual affection Those things that minister to her, including physical affection that she enjoys, communication, interest in her labor
- 1Corinthians 7:33 Mutual care. A desire to please the other person. These are not based on a "you serve me first" mentality, but "I serve you first"
- This prevents the "unteachable control-freak" mentality, with the only important opinion being the husband's. He recognizes his need for wisdom, and that God has given her to him to help him. Also sensitive to learning from her about the children things he may be missing.

II. THE SPIRITUAL OUTCOME OF THE COMMAND

- **That your prayers may not be hindered** in at least two ways
 - 1.) The hindrance of praying with a bad conscience. This is assuming the conscience is sensitive and pliable.
 - 2.) The hindrance of praying to a distant God. It is to recognize that God may resist me if I willingly disobey and treat my wife in an un-Christ like way.

APPLICATION

- Christ, as in other areas of our husbanding, is the perfect example: this is seen in Revelation 2 and 3.
- It is a command that takes time and hard work ("Fifty Questions to Ask Your Wife"). Practical suggestion of having a "date night."
- "50 Questions to ask your wife": www.rbcnashville.org/50Questions.pdf