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Peter's Word to Husbands

1 Peter 3:7

Prayer: *Father, we just again, we thank you for who you are, we thank you for the abundant grace that you give, we thank you for the gifts that you give over and over to us. We just again recognize that one of those gifts is not just the presence of your Son who died on a cross for us but also the presence of your Holy Spirit who enlightens us, who takes the book that you've given us, your word, and makes it able to be understood. And so Lord, again we're looking into your book and we recognize without the presence of your Holy Spirit this is just a bunch of words. So we pray that these words would come alive, that your Spirit would take them and drive them into our spirits, into our hearts, and into our minds and that it would have permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we've been looking at Peter's first epistle and last week we looked at what appeared to be a non sequitur and that's a conclusion that doesn't match its premise, something that doesn't really seem to make any sense. Peter at the end of 1 Peter chapter

2 describes how Jesus Christ went to the cross to purchase salvation for us. And he describes how he committed no sin, that there was no deceit found in his mouth, and when he was insulted, he never retaliated and that when he suffered, he made no threats, he simply entrusted himself to him who judges justly. And we said Peter appears to commit a non sequitur by suggesting in chapter 3, he says: *Wives, in the same way, be submissive to your husbands.* And we asked the question what did Jesus's death on a cross and a wife's willing submission to her husband have to do with each other? Well, the answer we learned last week is really everything. We learned that the cross and Jesus's attitude toward it was the very model that wives were to use to pattern Godly submission after. We saw that wives are called to the same attitude that we saw in Jesus himself in Philippians 2 which we just read. As he refused to cling to his equality with his heavenly father, wives, also in the same way, are called on to voluntarily surrender their God-given equality with their husband's and to graciously submit -- quote -- "to the servant leadership of their husbands" as the Southern Baptist Convention puts it. And we said last time that Peter's not singling out just wives here, we promised this week that we'd speak about the subject of husbands.

And sure enough our text today, *1 Peter 3:7*, addresses husbands by saying this: *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live*

with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. Now I know or at least I think what some of you wives may be thinking, I mean we have a whole paragraph with six verses on wives' submissions to their husband and one little sentence on the role of a husband, and even that sentence describes wives as weak. See, at first glance it seems as if God is calling on wives to live lives of great sacrifice and husbands, well, they just need to be considerate of their weak wives. You know take out the garbage occasionally and be sure not to forget birthdays and anniversaries, that kind of thing. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. What we have here is Peter is actually giving husbands a concrete means of breaking down our primary responsibility as husbands. That responsibility is put very simply in *Ephesians 5:25*. It says: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* Now we know Christ died for his church. Peter saying husbands are to love their wives with the same level of commitment, and the question that Peter raises this morning is a little bit different. He's particularly asking husbands not if we're willing to die for our wives but rather if we're willing to live for them. 1 Peter 3:7 breaks that willingness down to three specific areas in which we can pose three very specific, very probing questions that we need to ask ourselves as husbands about how we treat our wives.

Question number one is: Are we considerate? *Husbands, in the same way, be considerate.* Question number two: Are we respectful? *Be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect.* Question number three: Are we protective? *Treat them with respect as the weaker partner.* We're going to look at all three of these this morning, but once again, like last week, I want to first look at the bigger picture. Today I want to ask from a husband's perspective the same question that we asked last week and that is: What is the purpose of marriage? Well, the chief end of marriage is the same as the chief end of man, both are for the glory of God. Our problem is that we now live in a culture that has absolutely no idea of what that means. You see, God tells us the primary reason that we even exist is to bear God's image and he made that very clear right in the very beginning of Genesis 1. This is what he said: *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that keeps on the earth."* So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. So now in the bearing of that image, we give God praise, we give him worship, we give him honor and most importantly we give God glory. That's why we exist. I mean look around you, you will see that everything in this world serves a purpose. We've said it often:

fish swim and birds fly, insects crawl, and what do we do? God says we glorify. In all the universe there is only one creature who has received the charge that was given to us in Genesis 1. We were created male and female to bear the very image of God. I'll be the first one to tell you that's a totally foreign concept to the world and it's almost totally foreign to the church. And what it practically means is that every aspect of your existence is either going to affirm the glory of God or it's going to deny it. And furthermore, bearing God's image is not something that you can turn on or off at will, it's not something that you do. It's something that you are 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That aspect of being your faith is at least as important as doing your faith, maybe even more so. Ephesians 2 tells us that we are God's poiema, it's a Greek word, it means it's his workmanship. We are his workmanship, his artwork. And he says our lives speak out that artwork all the time. You know if I create let's say a sculpture, let's say that's my poiema, I create a sculpture and it's out there in a gallery somewhere, maybe it's in a home, it's not doing anything. It's simply being. It's always and continuously making statements about me. That statue is making a statement 24 hours a day, seven days a week about my creativity, about my craftsmanship, about my design skills. And if you're an artist you understand that once you release it, you can no longer keep it from constantly making that statement about you. Now, it may bring you constant

honor, it may bring you constant disgrace but it will never, never stop speaking. We are God's poiema. We're his greatest work of art. And God says marriage is one of the ways that that artwork is displayed. And furthermore he says he holds -- God holds husbands responsible for what that marriage speaks. *Ephesians 5:23* says: *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* You have to understand this is not a statement of opinion, it's not a statement of desire, it's not a statement of determination, this is a statement of fact.

Doug Wilson in his book *Reforming Marriage* points out the inescapable leadership that husbands possess. He says most folks confuse the Bible's use of indicatives and imperatives. I've referred to this many, many times. If you remember back from high school English, an indicative statement is a statement of fact: It indicates. Typically "the children are quiet." Now, an imperative statement, that's a command: "Children, be quiet." There's a difference. Our problem as husbands is we've turned a biblical indicative, that is to say the Bible says the husband *is* the head of the wife, we've turned that into an imperative. We say husbands, *be* the head of your wives. But that's not accurate. If you are the husband of a wife, you are the head of your wife, period. Fact. Statement. It's not a statement of doing, it's a

statement of being. It's not a command, it's simply a statement of fact. You can be a loving head, you can be an inconsistent head, you can be a dictatorial head, you can be an absent head but you will never get away from the Bible's indicative statement that husbands are the heads of their wives. I mean it's a fact of life, equivalent to the fact that trees have leaves and birds have wings. It's simply a fact. But there's also an imperative that the Bible is also very clear about with regard to marriage that we husbands oftentimes feel very free to ignore. It's the command given in *Ephesians 5:25* which says: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her.* This love, that's not an indicative, it's an imperative. It's a command. It's a command because loving your wife defines your headship as a husband. Loving your wife is what creates the poiema, the work of art that speaks volumes about God's glory. Or instead it speaks volumes of his disgrace. And this is a game that you signed on to when you said "I do" regardless of whether or not you ever felt like playing. This is a part that very few Christians understand that this is a game that's being played out to an unseen universe and there are no time outs, there's no off season as well. And so we stand as husbands responsible for our marital poiema, for the statement our marriage is proclaimed to the universe about how much Jesus Christ loves his church. And Paul makes that clear in *Ephesians 5:31*, he says: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father*

and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. That's the mystery.

Now I asked the question last week: What are we here for? I want to refine that again and just add to it a little bit and say: Husbands, what are we here for? I mean is it to provide for our families, to maintain a career, to put food on the table? Now I hear that all the time and actually if you're in this country, it seems ludicrous to be talking about putting food on the table, there's so much prosperity in this country, so much abundant wealth. I think when you refer to putting food on the table you may as well just say I just as soon put a new hot tub in the yard. I mean, it doesn't sound quite a noble as putting food on the table but it's not food on the table or a hot tub in the yard that's the issue here. It's the question of what is the purpose God has for husbands. So what are we here for? Well, the answer is summed up nicely in *Romans 15:6*, which says: *That together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And you know we glorify God by loving our wives. This is how we husband -- and I'm using this term as a verb here -- and how we husband defines the heart as well as the tongue of our marriages because 24 hours a day, seven days a week, our marriages are speaking. And Peter lays out for us in *1 Peter 3:7* what husbanding entails. He

says: *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

Peter here is laying out three areas of husbanding here. He speaks of consideration, of respect, and protection. And I want to focus first on how these points are introduced. I mean, there's a statement before Peter's list that introduces our text and it tells us how we are to respond to our wives. Peter starts off by saying: "*Husbands, in the same way.*" Now I hope that's starting to sound familiar, I hope you remember from last week because chapter three of 1 Peter starts off with the exact same phrase addressed to wives. He says in verse 1: "*In the same way, wives, submit to your own husbands.*" What is the way? That way is the way of the cross. That way is the way that God provided for us to go from sinners condemned to an eternity apart from God to having a relationship with him forever. Jesus Christ went to the cross to give us the ability to by faith take on his righteousness and give him our sin so that we could become blameless in God's sight. Let me just back up a little bit to 1 Peter 2:21 and apply what Peter is saying to our verse today that you should by now be very familiar through this description of how it is Jesus went to the cross to purchase that salvation for us. This is 1 Peter 2:21. He

says: *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.* So Peter in our text today is saying husbands, in the same way that your Lord Jesus went to the cross, consider your wives. No deceit, no insults, no retaliation, no threats, you know most wives would be overjoyed at that alone. So how do we consider our wives? Well, the same way that wives do: *We entrust ourselves to him who judges justly.* Peter introduces our husbanding by focusing on our attitude, how we go about it. He speaks first of consideration. He says, *"be considerate as you live with your wives."* Now the word here literally means "relate to your wife according to knowledge," that is according to your intimate understanding of what her needs are. And this may be a husband's greatest challenge. I mean it requires genuine mental effort to set aside our own way of thinking and literally enter into our wife's mindset. You may be shocked to find out it is vastly different than yours.

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs has an outstanding book entitled *Love and*

Respect and he speaks about this particular difference. This is what he says. He says: "Communication in marriage has been described, discussed, and dissected in hundreds, if not thousands, of books and articles. Why is communication between husbands and wives such a problem? It goes back to the fact that we send each other messages in 'code,' based on gender, even though we don't intend to. What I say is not what you hear, and what you think you heard is not what I meant at all. The way I like to picture the difference between men and women is that the woman looks at the world through pink sunglasses that color all she sees. The man however, looks at the world through blue sunglasses that color all he sees. Men and women can look at precisely the same situation and see life much differently. Inevitably, their pink and blue lenses cause their interpretation of things to be at odds to some degree. Not only do men and women see differently, but they also hear differently. To carry the pink and blue analogy a little further, God created men with blue hearing aids and women with pink hearing aids. They may hear the same words but get much different messages. Because men and women have sunglasses and hearing aids in different colors, they send each other messages in different codes."

Very wise words, but these words fly in the face of today's culture which sees gender as fluid, as changeable. And scripture tells us

in *Genesis 1*: *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.* Our culture now tells us that male and female are not immutable reflections of God's plan, instead they are decisions that you get to make about who you are. At last count there are now 73 different genders according to our culture. Those 73 genders are a testimony to the chaos and the anarchy that ensues when God is mocked or ignored. And the fact is men and women are created differently to complement each other such that neither is complete without the other. Peter in our text this morning is calling on men to treat their wives with consideration knowing that these differences are profound. We husbands are, as men, task-oriented. Our wives are, as women, people-oriented and that is so by design. The fundamental call of a husband is to his vocation; the fundamental call of a wife is to her husband. Man was given the image-bearing task to complete and woman was given to him to help him complete it because neither of them can do it alone. 1

Corinthians 11:8 says: *For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

See there are two different orientations in husbands and wives and God calls husbands into the orientation of their wives. "*Be considerate as you live with your wives*" means making the mental effort of truly seeing the importance of things she values as opposed to the things that you value. It's applying the same

mental energy to her orientation as to your own. Are your kids fights over candy and decisions about clothing or homework or household chores as important as business decisions, you know, big people stuff? Well, the answer is no. In fact they are far more important. When you put your time in at work you will be lucky to get a gold watch or a cake. And trust me, within a very short period of time, you will be forgotten. The time you put in building your family, however, will resonate for generations and generations. And how you consider your wife will resonate as well, or not. Consideration is commended of husbands by God. Business decisions, not necessarily. It's part of what "*husbands, love your wives*" means.

It's been said that love scripturally understood is not a sentiment, it's not an emotion, it's rather a series of actions which transform. This is an action that's taken by a husband's mind. And where husbands go astray is in refusing to mentally go where his wife has been all day. To put it into business setting, God has appointed husbands as the CEOs of the family. They're the chief executive officers and they will stand before God to give an account for their family. Wives are the COOs, they're the chief operating officers, and her job includes bringing the chief executive officer all of the family's critical decision making information. The problem is, many CEOs just aren't interested.

Oftentimes we're just too tired, business was just too hard, the information seems unimportant, so we think. So instead of acting like a CEO would by looking forward, by anticipating problems, by providing thoughtful, careful, prayerful decisions, we punt, we leave it to our wives to figure it all out. We wind up dumping the CEO's job into the COO's workload, abandoning our headship. The COO then becomes more and more resentful over decisions dumped into her lap that belong in the CEO's lap. And it happens often because we CEOs are clueless. I mean after a while a trigger incident causes the COO to explode and neither she nor the CEO knows why and the answer is actually simple: The CEO has abandoned his job. See, consideration is not an option, it's an imperative. It's not an indicative.

The second area of Peter's words says: *"Treat them with respect."* You know, "the old lady." "My ball and chain." "The boss." I'm guilty of that one. I do that a lot. But you know, even "yes, dear" said in a certain way -- and you all know this, husbands -- is a way of subtlety or not so subtlety expressing disrespect for our wives. Sadly enough it's often expressed directly to our children. If you go back in 1 Peter, I want you to recall a statement that was made in 1 Peter 2:7, Peter calls the Lord a chosen and precious cornerstone and he repeats again in verse 7, he says: *Now to you who believe, that stone is precious.* Well,

understand the very same word for "precious" is also translated in our text this morning as "respect." It says treat them with respect and the word "respect" hardly does it justice, "preciousness" is much more like it. What Peter is saying is husbands are to treat their wives as someone precious.

Now I want you to think for a moment. I just want you to list in your own mind the wives who are obviously thought of as precious by their husbands. I want you to see if you can come up with a huge list or a tiny list or a list. And the key word here is obviously, something that's easily seen by others. Doug Wilson has this observation. He says this: "If a Christian man is asked about it, he may say he does honor and respect his wife in his heart. But the Bible doesn't require us to honor and respect people in our hearts. It requires us to honor and respect them. The heart is obviously where it must begin, but if it never shows up in external behavior, it is not biblical honor and respect. Biblical honor must show up in verbal and visible demonstrations that proceed from the heart, but are not locked up in the heart." You know I've heard it said that a woman's countenance is all you need to know about whether or not her husband sees her as precious. And the odd thing is is husbands who disrespect their wives are really disrespecting themselves according to scripture. *Ephesians 5:28* says: *In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their*

own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. And respect is really just love made visible.

Now the third aspect is that of protection. *"To treat them with respect as the weaker partner."* And the word "weaker" here specifically refers to physical strength and capacity and no more. And once again we look at our culture as culture has tried to blend differences in the sexes so that even this distinctive is now seen as disparaging to women. I'm telling you "weaker partner" is simply a statement of fact. Females are physically weaker than males. Duh. Who doesn't know that? But we've seen fit to assign different values to different roles when in fact they're merely different. A scalpel and a machete are both cutting instruments, right? But there the similarity ends. One is a precise and delicate instrument, the other is large, imprecise and a strong instrument. And we recognize how silly it is to see them as similar. I mean it's equally ridiculous to ask: What's better, a machete or a scalpel? Well, that's an absurd choice without a qualifying question, and the question is better for what? You want to chop down a field? Well, a scalpel is truly awful. You want to go into an operating room? A machete is awful there as well. They're both cutting tools and you can have good and bad scalpels, you can have good and bad machetes but we never compare machetes and scalpels. So why do people compare men and women? They both

have the same purpose, to bring glory and honor to God, but that purpose is carried out in ways that differ as greatly as does a machete and a scalpel, and describing a wife as the weaker vessel is no different than saying functionally she's the scalpel and her husband's the machete. They both differ greatly in function while they share an identical purpose, which is to glorify God.

Practically speaking, the husband's strength is a protection for his wife. Again, Doug Wilson puts it well when he says this, he says: "The husband has a responsibility to make sure that whenever the children even think about talking back to their mother, they see their father's shadow looming behind her. Her weakness must be acknowledged as his so that his strength might become her strength." Husbands are to view their wives' weakness as their own weakness because they see themselves as a unit. You can ask my kids and I'm pretty sure they're going to tell you I was pretty easy going with one exception. There was one thing I just wouldn't tolerate and that was disrespect or back talk. Sass your mother and I would lose it and I would lose it almost instantly. And in this instance my strength complemented her weakness. It protected her and told the children we are a unit. One thing I said to my kids over and over again, if you think you can come between your mother and me, you will lose every time. I say sass her and you sassed me and you're going to be sorry you did.

The proof that God sees husbands and wives as a unit, as very different yet absolutely equal is in the very next statement made in 1 Peter. He says: *"Treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life."* Well you can't be a co-heir unless you're first co-equal. Peter says wives are heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, that gift is extended to all of God's children, male and female alike.

Galatians 3:26 says: *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Now some one would have you believe that since we are all one in Christ, there's no longer any distinctives between male and female. Well, if that is so then God has wasted an awful lot of instruction and time tied specifically to addressing those differences that we just spoke about: consideration, respect, and protection. Those are obligations of husbands and they specifically address differences. The differences in wives and husbands that today's culture within and without the church just seems to want to gloss over. But the last statement in verse 7 ties it all together, it says: *Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your*

prayers. So we ask how does consideration, respect, and protection have anything to do with praying? Well, it has everything to do with who we are praying to. You see, the key to Christian marriage lies in both partners realizing that they answer to someone much, much bigger than each other.

You know, when I was growing up I used to taunt my older brother who was much bigger and much stronger than me but I was much, much better at taunting. I mean I just knew the right inflection, the right tone along with a certain look that would just make him come unglued. But I was smart enough to never get into a situation where I didn't have access to my mom or dad and if he started beating me up, I would just holler out loud and somebody bigger than both of us would come and put an end to it. You know the same is true for Christian marriage and the one who is greater than husband and wife is the Holy Spirit. You see, when I'm inconsiderate, when I just don't feel like disciplining my mind to enter into her world, when I'm disrespectful, when I refuse to see her as precious, as a gift that God has given uniquely to me, when I sit back and refuse to be her strength, her protection because I don't want the hassle, I grieve the Holy Spirit. I mean the first thing I notice when my wife and I have a fight is the Holy Spirit. And let me tell you, I can handle Janice pretty well and after 48 years she can handle me pretty well but I can't handle the Holy

Spirit at all. I mean I can walk away from a great argument on my part but I can't walk away without hearing the Holy Spirit say in that still small voice, "What kind of nonsense did you just pull?" I understand exactly what Peter is saying when he says, "*so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*" You see, it goes back to the primary purpose in marriage. It's the poem of God that tells the universe just how much Christ loved his church. And when I love my wife, I shout how Christ loves. When I refuse to love her as I'm commanded to, I still shout. And when I shout that Christ is inconsiderate, that Christ is disrespectful or even cowardly, the Holy Spirit grieves and my spirit can't stand that, so he drives us to reconciliation. It is less painful to me than grieving the Holy Spirit. I mean my wife and I pray together every day, we've done so for many, many years and if we're not right, we can't pray. And if we can't pray, we know we're in trouble, so we know we have no choice but to get right. That's God's design for husbands.

There is so much to husbanding that we men have become totally clueless to, but there's always hope. Doug Wilson's *Reforming Marriage* is a great book to read, it's a very hard and a very good starting place. I don't know of a single person who has read that book who doesn't say what a mess I have made of my marriage, but that's a great starting place. See, we've had 30 or 40 years of cultural devastation that has corrupted and greatly weakened the

church, and that's bad. But we've also been able to identify and clarify what biblical truth really is when it comes to the roles of a husband and wife and that's good. What is true about marriage is that it is a profoundly mysterious statement that we husbands speak about the love that Christ has for his church. We think we're here for all kinds of silly reasons, but basically we're here to make that statement, and make it we will whether we choose to or not. Whether we make it well or whether we make it poorly, we still make that statement and God still makes his. It's *1 Corinthians 10:31: Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* Let's pray.

Father, I just again thank you for your word to husbands. I thank you for the call to husbands to be considerate, to be respectful, to be protective of their wives. Again, Lord, we just again, we want to enter into their mindset, we want to view them as precious, we want to offer our protection for whatever weakness they may have so that together we can both accomplish the task we have of bearing your image and so glorifying you. Give us that ability, I pray, give us the ability to glorify God with the poem of our marriages, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.