

Wisdom for Husbands
The Rest of the Story (Part 2)
Palmetto Baptist Church

Texts:

Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her;”

Colossians 3:19 “Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”

1 Peter 3:7 “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Introduction:

None of the more than 20 million Americans watching television on the morning of January 28, 1986, will ever forget the tragic explosion they witnessed as the Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded 73 seconds after lifting off from the launching pad at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Tragically, all seven astronauts on board died in the explosion among them Christa McAuliffe, the first civilian to ever fly a space mission.

Could this national tragedy have been avoided? Hindsight has a way of crystallizing the importance of events/circumstances that perhaps did not appear at the time to be as critical as they really were.

For instance, subsequent investigation revealed the cause of the accident to be the failure of an “O-ring seal” in the solid-fuel rocket on the right side of the space shuttle. The unusually cold temperatures caused the seal to fail, allowing hot gasses from the engine to leak through the joint igniting a chain reaction which ultimately led to the explosion of the shuttle.

What most people don’t know is that NASA officials were aware of this flaw in the O-ring!

During the week leading up to the launch, NASA experts on several occasions were forced to consider aborting the mission due to weather or equipment malfunction and even more tragically, the concerns of NASA engineers about the ability of the O-ring to perform in record cold temperatures were swept aside by Mission Control authorities. An aeronautic analyst from NBC, Jim Oberg (who spent 22 years at NASA's Johnson Space Center as a mission control operator and orbital designer) had this to say:

The disaster would never have happened if managers and workers had clung to known principles of safely operating on the edge of extreme hazards – nothing was learned by the disaster that hadn't already been learned, and then forgotten!

The meltdown and explosion of the Challenger shuttle was a national tragedy of monumental proportions that stunned a nation and traumatized millions of people who witnessed the explosion. However, an even greater tragedy occurs when a marriage melts down and a family explodes – this is especially true when one or both of the parties is a born-again believer whose marriage broke apart because one or both of the parties failed to follow the clear instructions set forth multiple times by God in multiple places in His Word. AND – way more than 20 million people are watching (Eph 3:10) what happens to your marriage – and they never forget!

God is not honored, His grace is not magnified, His Wisdom is not displayed, and His glory is not advanced when His sons and daughters live in relationships that are in “melt-down” simply because of a willful refusal to heed and obey God's stated will in this matter.

God has given “wisdom” for marriage to Wives and we took two services to see what that wisdom entailed. Last Sunday, we began looking at what God's wisdom for husbands involved and we studied the ***first of three important responsibilities that God gave to Christian husbands – Love Your Wife Sacrificially as Christ loved His Church!***

This morning we want to look briefly at the other responsibilities God has assigned to Christian men in marriage revealed in two important texts in addition to the wisdom given in Ephesians 5:25-32.

I. Love Her Selflessly and Sacrificially (Ephesians 5:25-33)

A. To this Extent – As Christ loved the Church (5:25)

B. In this Way – And gave Himself for her (5:25)

C. For this Purpose – In order to remove any hindrance to Christ’s sanctification of her (5:26-27)

D. For this Reason – Because she is your body (5:28-29)

E. With these Relational Commitments – Deep affection and devoted tenderness. (5:29-32)

II. Love Her Willingly and Joyfully (Col 3:19)

“Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”

A. The Warning (Danger) – becoming embittered.

- Do not become bitter and harsh as you strive to love her.
- “bitter” (**pikrainw** – *make bitter*)
- The term is used to describe something that is sour, distasteful, or that produces resentment – Peter wept this way when he sinned against the Lord.
- It is a command in the passive voice – this means men are to constantly guard against this happening to them or developing in their hearts – taking root and gaining ground.
- Paul is warning husbands that there is a very real danger of becoming resentful and hardened (bitter) toward their wives because of what they may encounter in her as they attempt to love her as Paul exhorted them to do in Eph 5:25-32.

B. The Reasons – why do men become bitter toward their wives?

- Paul does not articulate reasons by which men become sour toward their wives. Perhaps he did not provide these reasons because he did not want to imply that they were grounds or justification for such harshness of spirit and hardness of heart.
- However, in Genesis 3:16 God did provide at least one foundational reason for why marriages, even between committed Christian people, are difficult.
- The reason is the specific impact that Sin and the Fall had on the natural inclination and desires that men would have for their wives and their wives would have for their husbands because of the damage done to their human nature by sin.
- God warned Eve that her desire would be to overcome or to rule over her husband – the same language God used to warn Eve is found in God’s warning to Cain when He stated that sin was crouching at the door and its desire was for Cain, but Cain must rule over it (Gen 4:7).
- Before sin affected the world, Eve’s natural desire was to eagerly and joyfully support and follow Adam’s leadership. After the Fall, sin affected her nature so that instead of supporting and following Adam’s leadership, she would easily resent and resist it.
- This same text in Genesis also reveals that sin had a significant effect on Adam. Prior to the Fall, Adam led by loving and serving Eve. After the Fall, God bluntly tells Eve that Adam will rule over her – and the implication is not that of a kind, gracious, selfless ruler using his power and position for good. The flavor of the text seems to present the idea of a ruler using his power in a harsh and domineering way over another.
- In a marriage, both of these sinful tendencies abound and can actually feed the sinful tendency of their mate – thus causing even further hardness of heart and harshness of spirit until shalom has been horrifically shattered in that marriage.
- The symbol of all of this wretched brokenness was an earth marked by thorns. And it would remain under this brokenness until one day Messiah would appear, wearing a crown on his head

- not the golden diadem but rather a crown of thorns as He bore the full weight of the curse for us in order to deliver us from its bondage and creation along with us.
- However, for believers, though the reality of the curse is still with us, the power of the curse over us has been broken by Christ.
- Therefore, we no longer have to live and respond to the sinful urges of our old nature even in our marriages – especially in our marriage. So ... how should we respond to our wives when they fail in some way to live up to our expectation however legitimate or biblical that expectation might be?

C. The Response – love her with a joyful and willing heart!

- In the same way, Christ continues to love us when we fail to meet His biblical injunctions.
- With the same joyful delight, we experience from him when we come for help.
- With the same gracious mercy, we receive in abundance when we come with brokenness and appropriate sorrow before Him.
- No matter what we have or haven't done – Jesus is always tender with us. He is always willing to receive us. He always delights in us and makes us aware of His joy in us.

III. Love Her Graciously and Considerately (1 Peter 3:7)

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

- This is the 3rd and final text in the NT that contains instruction/wisdom from God to husbands regarding the way they are to love their wives.
- If you were to stand before God and ask His advice regarding your wife and your marriage – there are three texts that contain the very words He would say to you. (Ephesians 5:25-32; Col 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7).

- All three of the passages fill out what God expects a husband to do and how he is to live with the wife God entrusted to that man's care.
- Ephesians reveals that he must love her sacrificially. Colossians reveals that he must not become harsh or embittered in his heart toward her. This is the third and final of the NT passages and other than Ephesians, it contains perhaps the strongest admonitions.

A. *What are Husbands to do?*

*live with your wives in an **understanding way**.*

1. Live/dwell with your wives – the idea here is to live out your life on a day-by-day basis.
 - more than just sharing the same address
 - actually living out your daily lives together intentionally and thoughtfully.
2. In an understanding way – more than just being informed about her – there is a *specific* understanding or knowledge that God wants you to know about your particular wife.
 - More than just reading a book about women and their needs.
 - Not talking merely about knowing her likes and dislikes – favorite foods, colors, etc.
 - More than just understanding her need for communication and figuring out her “love language” or particular personality type.
 - All of that may be helpful – but that is not the “understanding” that God is telling Husbands is indispensable.
 - In fact, a husband can be clueless about all of the other things and still have a good marriage – but – even if he has all of the other “understandings” but fails to get this particular understanding – he isn't love his wife properly. And at the end of this text – Peter notes that a Christian man who misses this will experience some severe spiritual consequences.

B. *What exactly are husbands to “understand” about their wives?*

...showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel,

- The particular knowledge that God wants you to understand about your wife is that God made her as a “weaker vessel” – and whatever this means, it doesn’t mean morally or spiritually inferior or somehow less valuable. It is simply talking about her physical nature and her function in her God-given role as the image bearer He made who would be uniquely suitable as a mate for you and you for her.

1. Recognize the reality of her weakness

- “vessel” – reference to her as a person, or to her body.
- Both husband and wife are “vessels” – and they both are physically frail. Not that the wife is “weak” and the husband is “strong” – both are relatively physically fragile – but in certain areas, she is more so than he.
- Human observation confirms that the female body is not designed in the same way that the male body and that in certain aspects, she is more fragile.

2. Understand the nature of her weakness – in what sense is she to be considered a weaker vessel?

- Not morally inferior
- Not mentally inferior
- Not spiritually inferior
- Not less important than her husband
- Simply – physically, women are designed by God in a way that is in some ways more fragile and yet with a strength often missing in men.

Illustration: Gold is not less valuable than steel, but it isn’t as strong as steel.

Illustration: Fine china isn’t less valuable than a plastic or Styrofoam cup, but it is more fragile.

Illustration: Certain body parts are more strategic but less sturdy. Your heart, brain, lungs, liver

are more strategically important than your toes or fingers. But they are all of great value to the well-being of the body.

3. Understand God's purpose for her weakness

- My personal opinion is that the “weakness” Peter is talking about in this text refers to a pre-fall aspect of how God designed marriage – this means that whatever this “weakness” is, it was part of God’s perfect design of Eve.
- To be sure, sin and the Fall did affect her and introduced sinful weakness into her heart and life in the very same way that can be found in your life as her husband. So, if we are talking about sinful weakness in Eve, we as husbands have that very same weakness which would make it difficult to see how and why Peter highlights her weakness while ignoring ours as husbands.
- I believe that what Peter is talking about here is not referring to a sinful weakness or even an imperfection or flaw in how God designed woman in relationship to man. In other words, this “weakness” is not weakness in the way we typically think of a weakness or flaw in something or someone. I believe whatever Peter is referring to was part of God’s initial, perfect, and good design for Eve.
- Another way of saying this is that God designed Eve in a way that was intended to give Adam an opportunity to display value, treasure, care for, and joyfully service to Eve *because* of God’s intention to use human marriage as a universal display of Christ’s desire and intention to do the same for His Church.
- The “weakness” is not a flaw but intentionally designed by God to give Eve (and every woman) priceless value and worth. For example, part of the inherent beauty and worth of a priceless crystal goblet is that it naturally demands a higher level of appreciation, care, and treatment than a plastic mug or cup.

- You would never use a fine piece of china or an irreplaceable piece of crystal without care and attention to its nature and design. And it is this aspect of its design that gives it such immense value and worth.
- You might use a plastic mug or cup as a place to store nails or you might toss it in your backpack to take camping because it is easily replaceable if something happens to it. However, you would never do this with an irreplaceable treasured crystal goblet that was priceless in value.
- This is what Peter had in mind – your wife is not a mug or a plastic cup. Rather, she is a treasure of great worth, and as a husband, you are to value and care for her accordingly.
- And the big reason for this is that God wanted a way to display to the universe how Jesus Christ would love, treasure, value, and serve His Church.

C. How should husbands respond in light of this reminder?

...***showing honor*** to the woman

- Showing honor = to assign value and to treat with care and attention just like you would value and care for a valuable precious piece of china or like you would give attention and care to precious work of art made of gold or precious metal.
- In other words, treat her with loving tenderness – give her relational attention and spiritual care just like you would give an important dignitary! Care for her like you would care for the most valuable and treasured objects you possess.
- Love her and treat her preferentially – above all others, even yourself and your own needs.

D. Why should husbands render this care and attention to their wives?

...and as ***being heirs together*** of the grace of life

- She is a fellow heir of the same eternal life that you enjoy!
- She has received the same forgiveness as you on the same grounds.
- She has the same eternal destiny as you.

- She enjoys the same standing as a child of God as you enjoy.
- She has the same inheritance as you.
- Even though she has been assigned by God to submit herself to you and to live under your authority in this life – She is your equal in her standing and relationship to God.
- Her accountability and stewardship is to God and not to you.
- She is an individual priest before God and enjoys the same priestly privileges and access to God as you.
- She will rule with Christ independently from you ... and part of your responsibility to create an environment that is conducive to the work God is doing in her to prepare her to rule with Him.
- It is only in this momentary life and in this particular household that she is to arrange herself under you by supporting and following your leadership as you love and serve her by following and serving Christ.

Galatians 3:28 – *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Illustration: On May 8, 2005 a 20-year-old young man named Henry Charles Albert David Wales entered the British Army. His father is the Crown Prince of England, Charles and his grandmother is Queen Elizabeth II. As a cadet (and later as a 2nd Lieutenant) he served under a hierarchy of officers.

But – every one of those officers instinctively knew that although Prince Harry was their equal, he merited unique relational consideration – because his father happened to be Prince Charles, heir to the throne of England. This was in fact the only reason he saluted them and not the other way around since it was his father’s will that he serve under them as a soldier in the British army. Can you imagine an officer in the British army being so foolish to mistreat or abuse the son of the future King?

Men, we really need to understand that even though Scripture instructs our wives to submit to us – this is so only because her Heavenly Father has assigned her to that role in this life – and you will one day have to answer to Him for how you have treated her.

She is destined to rule over the new creation and you and I will answer to any damage or obstacle we have put in her way as God prepares her for this glorious role.

E. What happens when a husband fails or refuses to dwell in this way with his wife? ... so that your prayers may not be hindered.

- You do real spiritual damage to your walk with God when you fail to give honor and care to your wife – God declares that failure in this area hinders your prayers to him.
- “Hinder” – a term used to describe cutting up a road so as to make it impassable to those coming behind.
- When you fail to live with your wife according to the knowledge God gives you in this text to help you treat her tenderly, carefully, graciously – then you put all kinds of obstacles in the way of your prayers.

1. First, this kind of inattention and inconsideration will make it very difficult for her to want to pray with you or you with her – it will hinder you praying together.
2. Second, God states that a man who consistently lives this way with his wife is a man whose prayers He will not hear!

Conclusion:

- Men – let’s be honest this morning and ask ourselves a penetrating question – do we really love our wives this way and do we treat them with tender affection and care as a valuable, treasured friend?

- Do our wives actually feel this way given how we treat them? Do they feel valued, cherished, and genuinely treasured? Do they believe that you see and value the relationship God has given you with her as priceless and irreplaceable?
- Is their experience with you that of a priceless and irreplaceable treasure that you value highly – or are they more the plastic mug or styrofoam cup in the relationship shelf of your life.
- And, if this is the case, could this be the reason we as husbands have a sense that we are spiritually weak and our prayers go unheard and unanswered?
- If we would just live together in these truths – our marriages would glorify our Father in Heaven and would be unassailable displays of the power of the gospel to establish shalom on earth with people who truly know Christ and walk in His Spirit.
- So ... here is an assignment for each of us.
 1. What one thing can we do to communicate to our wives that we treasure them and value them above all other relationships in our lives?
 2. What one thing can we do to care for them and protect them like we would protect a priceless, irreplaceable treasure we had the good fortune to have in our lives?
 3. What one way can we display our joy, delight, and enjoyment in the wonderful treasure God has given us in our wives?