

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 17 June 2018. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

God's Handbook for Husbands (Part 2)

1 Peter 3:7

In last week's message, we focused our attention on one verse: **1 Peter 3:7**. In this one verse, God gives four instructions to Christian husbands; but the first of them is, **"Husbands, dwell with [your wives] according to knowledge."** As we studied this command, we saw that "dwelling with your wife according to knowledge" involves *every* area of knowledge—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Christian husbands should know their wives' needs in every area, and should be prepared to help their wives with those needs. This requires studying your *wife* carefully; and it requires studying *God's Word* diligently, so that you may know how to *help* your wife with her spiritual needs.

We especially focused on the area of *spiritual* needs. Husband, God has made you the "head" of your wife. This means that you are responsible to assist your wife in her spiritual growth. This requires that you put on the **"mind of Christ"** (the spiritual understanding that is available to all believers). Husband, you and your wife are not two separate people living together and mutually benefitting from each other: rather, you are **"one flesh"**! You and your wife are a unit (one "body"); and you are the *head* of that body. (And Christ is *your* Head.) Just as a head ("mind") is aware of the needs and trouble spots throughout the human body, so the husband should be aware of his wife's needs. *You*, husband, have been given this great responsibility.

In today's message, we will be studying the last three instructions that Peter gives to husbands. The title of this message is **God's Handbook for Husbands (Part 2)**.

Read 1 Peter 3:7.

I. Instruction #2: Give honour to your wife.

This is an interesting command. What does it mean to "give honour"? In fact, what, exactly, is the biblical meaning of "honour"? Well, the word that is translated as **"honour"** is the Greek word *time*. It means "esteem of the highest degree; dignity; a precious value or price." Husband, this is what *you* are commanded to "give" unto your wife.

Now, this raises a question: What does it mean to **"give"** honour to your wife? It would seem that a wife either *has* honour (by virtue of her virtuous life), or she doesn't. How, then, can you *give* honour to her? Let's look at another Scripture where this same wording is used.

Read Revelation 4:9-11 and 5:11-12.

How can you "give" honour to God, when He *already has* infinite honour, by virtue of His holiness? Well, when you look at the context of these verses, it is obvious that "giving

honour” to God means *acknowledging* His honour. It means to *acknowledge* what He has done to *merit* His honour, and to *praise* Him for it.

Similarly, to “give honour” to your wife means to *acknowledge* the things that she has done to deserve honour, and to praise her for those things. It doesn’t mean that you ignore her faults, and never address a problem, because you don’t want to “hurt her feelings.” You *should* help your wife in her personal sin struggles. To “give her honour” simply means to let her know that you appreciate the good that she does. Don’t talk about her faults in front of your children, or in front of others. Don’t put her down. Let her and others know that you appreciate the virtuous things she does. As we have seen repeatedly over the last few months, the husband of the virtuous woman “**praiseth**” his wife (**Proverbs 31:28**). The Lord Himself praised the churches of Asia for the things that they were doing right (even though He also had to rebuke 5 of those 7 churches for their failures). If Christ praised *His* bride, the church, even when she had serious faults, should we Christian husbands treat *our* brides with less honour?

Now, let’s get even more practical. What else does “giving honour to your wife” demand? It also demands that you *confirm her authority in front of your children!*

Read Proverbs 1:8-9.

This is an area where we Christian husbands can drop the ball, if we’re not careful. Husband, you have a *mandate* from God to teach your children to obey not only *you*, but your *wife*. If you do not teach your children that they are to respect and obey *mum* as well as you, then you are bringing dishonour upon your wife. **Proverbs 29:15** says, “**The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.**” Now, that’s an interesting statement, isn’t it? Obviously, an unruly child brings shame to his *father* as well as to his mother; yet, Solomon particularly states that a rebellious child brings shame to his *mother*. Why? Perhaps Solomon was stressing to *his* son, Rehoboam, that “If you don’t reprove and chasten your child when he disobeys his *mum*, it is going to cause shame *to her* one day.” In other words, “If you love your wife, you’d better be teaching your children to obey her.” More than once I have heard a lady tell me, “I don’t know what it is about the sound of my husband’s voice; but there’s something about it that commands respect from my kids in a way that my voice *can’t*.” I think there’s something to that statement, men! Mark it down: Your wife will reap a bitter harvest if you allow your children to be bold toward their mother. By not making them mind *mum*, you are teaching them that *mum* isn’t worthy of their respect.

By the way, remember what we read in **Proverbs 31:28**? We read that the virtuous woman’s children “**arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.**” Did you notice that the children and the father are acting in *unison*? If you want your children to call their mother “blessed,” then you’d better be setting the example, husband. Praise your wife, and you will be training your children to praise her *with you*.

II. Instruction #3: Realise that your wife is the “weaker vessel.”

(Read 1 Peter 3:7 again.) Peter’s statement that the wife is the “**weaker vessel**” is downright offensive to the modern Western mind. The modern Westerner says, “How dare Peter say that the woman is ‘weaker’ than the man? How chauvinistic can you get?” Christians, on the other hand, should not be the least bit embarrassed by this statement. This is God’s Word, not Peter’s personal opinion. The God who created both the man and the woman says that the

woman is the “*weaker vessel*.” (He ought to know!) Of course, women are equal with men in their *value* as God’s creation; and Christian women stand equally with Christian men as sinners saved by the grace of God. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, redeemed women will receive just as much reward for their service to God as redeemed men will receive. However, men and women are *not* equal in their physical and emotional makeup, nor in the roles that God designed them to perform. God created men and women very differently!

In what sense is the woman weaker? Well, for one thing, she is weaker in her *physical* makeup. It is a fact that men are anatomically larger, and usually physically stronger, than women. God made men to be labourers, working to provide for their families. However, the *physical* aspect of the “weaker vessel” is not what I wish to focus upon this morning. What I wish to focus on is a woman’s *emotional* makeup, and how it can affect her *spiritually*.

Folks, let’s face it: women are more in touch with their emotions than men are. Are emotions bad? Not at all—if they be kept in submission to God’s Word. God *Himself* created the woman with her emotional needs, in order to complement the man. Though God created Eve with stronger emotions than Adam’s, she was still *perfect*. Until she chose to listen to the serpent and disobey God, her emotions were in perfect submission to God, and to Adam. The problem began when *sin* entered into the picture. Sin warps every single emotion. Love, anger, hatred, jealousy, sadness, joy—every single one of these emotions, *which God Himself created in us* (to be used in the right way) became polluted with sin, selfishness, and pride.

So, what does that mean? This means that the woman is potentially more vulnerable to the attack of the enemy because of her strong emotional makeup. How do I know this? Well, let’s rewind the tape, and go back to the Garden. Upon *whom* did Satan choose to launch his attack upon humanity? Did he start with Adam, or with Eve? He began with *Eve*.

Read 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

Satan is extremely perceptive. Before he decided whom to approach first, you can be sure that he *studied* Adam and Eve closely. In Eve, Satan found an emotional component which he knew he could try to exploit. Eve was sinless and perfect; yet, Satan knew that there was a more rational, sceptical component in Adam which would make him harder to attack directly. I know this to be true because Paul points out that the man was “***not deceived***”! Apparently, Adam *realised* that this was an attack from God’s enemy. He had probably been forewarned by God that an enemy was on the loose. It was up to Adam to be prepared for danger.

Men, God made us to excel in volition, problem-solving, decision-making, and taking pressure. This is why all the responsibilities of the Garden, as well as the warning not to eat of the tree, were given to *Adam*. Women’s tendency is to be tender and nurturing: thus, they often don’t take pressure as well as men do. (On the other hand, after they’ve had their “good cry,” the pressure is relieved.) Now, men are good at storing the pressure, putting it aside, and dealing with it later. On the other hand, if they *don’t* deal with it later, they will become distant and detached. This is why we husbands need to learn to cast all our care upon the Lord in prayer, and then to help our *wives* to cast all *their* care upon the Lord.

Adam had a responsibility to make proactive decisions to protect his wife. Sadly, he dropped the ball. Now, the fact that Eve was deceived, and that Adam *wasn’t* deceived, doesn’t make *Eve* more responsible. It’s actually just the opposite! Adam’s knowing, wilful disobedience

made *him* more responsible before God. (This is why the Bible continually emphasises our father *Adam's* sin, not our mother Eve's sin.) Even though Eve had already sinned, Adam should have maintained his allegiance to God, and refused to eat the fruit!

Our race has been fallen now for about 6,000 years. However, the man is still the head of his wife, by divine ordinance; and the wife, because of her strong emotions, is still in a more vulnerable spiritual position. **Christian husband, this makes you all the more responsible for the spiritual protection of your wife!** Satan knows that your wife has a stronger emotional component; and he and his cohorts are still going after *her* in order to get to *you*. This is probably part of the reason why God does not permit the woman to preach, teach, or to lead men in the church. The woman is more prone to listen to emotion; and when emotions are hearkened to, the Word of God is easily set aside. The husband, though just as sinful as his wife, does not have this weakness *to the extent* that the woman does. However, he still needs to listen to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. He must *not* follow his own reason. Every Christian husband needs to study God's Word, so that he can see the spiritual dangers that could affect his wife's thinking, and cause her to set aside God's Word.

What are some practical examples? Well, parental discipline is one area where the wife's emotions could cause her to be the **"weaker vessel."** A wife may be more prone to hesitate to punish the children when discipline is in order. Why? Because her tender, nurturing emotions can blind-side her to the fact that her little boy (or girl) needs to be punished! Husband, this is why it is your responsibility to take charge of the discipline. Don't put all the discipline duty on your wife! This is a pressure that she shouldn't have—especially when she is going through times of physical pain, or when her emotions are running high. Husband, take the lead! Be your wife's spiritual helper and protector. If you yourself are prone to be *angry* when you discipline, then you'd better be asking God to help you too conquer your anger, so that you won't **"provoke...your children to wrath"** (Ephesians 6:4).

Allow me to give another example. About five years ago, there was a book that was popular in evangelical circles. It is entitled *Have Heart*; and it was co-written by Steve and Sarah Berger, who are professing Christians. In August of 2009, this couple's 19-year-old son Josiah (whom they call Siah), died in a tragic car accident; and according to his mother, Siah appeared to her in a dream only days after the funeral, and spoke to her. Now, what did she do? Instead of evaluating this subjective experience in light of God's Word, Mrs. Berger began to talk out loud to Siah, about two weeks after the funeral. God's Word calls communication with the dead "necromancy" and "consulting a familiar spirit," and forbids it in the most solemn terms; yet, Mrs. Berger could not see this danger.

As Mrs. Berger conversed with this being who claimed to be "Siah," she told him that she needed to be "involved with [his] life, even now." And guess what? He *did* get involved—*really* involved! Soon, Mrs. Berger not only had dreams of Siah, but she began to *see* him, in broad daylight (such as when he "appeared" in a church service, walked down the aisle, and whispered in her ear)! In time, her husband, many friends, and *even their pastor* were having dreams, in which "Siah" imparted profound spiritual insight and alleged revelations about Heaven (which, by the way, do *not* match up with Scripture). Now, here is the real clincher: Mrs. Berger says, 'We mean no disrespect to the prophets' [in other words, to the authors of Scripture]; 'but the idea of Siah being able to observe the choices we make here on earth is *way more motivating* as we seek to live for God.' In other words, she is saying that the fact

that *God* is constantly watching her isn't enough to motivate her to stay on course: but the fact that her "*Siah*" is supposedly watching her *does* motivate her. She's saying that God's Word isn't powerful and convicting enough. (Do *you* see a problem with that? I do!)

Folks, there is no gentler way to say this: Any being who claims to be a deceased loved one is a demon, masquerading as an "***angel of light***." The Bible says that physical death is *separation* of the spirit from the body, and from the physical realm; and we are forbidden, in this life, to communicate with the departed. Some people may ask, "Pastor, if *your* wife were to die, and she were to appear by your bedside, wouldn't you believe that God had allowed her to come back to you?" No, I wouldn't—because God's Word informs me otherwise! I would claim the blood of Jesus, and command the wicked spirit, in Jesus' name, to leave *immediately!* Satan knows when we are vulnerable; and he knows that in times of emotional distress, we are more likely to forget "sound doctrine," and to go where our emotions lead us. This is especially true for ladies, whose emotions can be much deeper at such times.

Now, please do not misunderstand: every saved woman has just as much ability as the man to discern good from evil, because she has the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, and a regenerated mind. As long as a Christian lady is subjecting her feelings to the truth of God's Word, she will not be deceived. Nonetheless, God has made every husband the head of his wife. Husband, it is your job to protect your wife in regard to her emotions.

By the way, before we leave this point, I'd like to clarify something from our passage. (**Read 1 Timothy 2:15 again.**) This verse is grossly misinterpreted by many professing Christian religions. Many religions teach that the more children a Christian woman has, the more likely she is to make it into heaven. Folks, not only is this teaching utterly false: it is what Paul calls an "accursed Gospel!" An "accursed gospel" is any false gospel which adds human merit to salvation. Salvation is a free gift, which Christ has purchased for us with His blood. Salvation is by His *grace* alone, and not by our own merits—not even the merit of having children. (**Quote Ephesians 2:8-9.**) What Paul is teaching in **1 Timothy 2:15** is simply this: by having children, the woman was used by God as a "vehicle" to bring the Saviour into the world.

All the way back in the Garden, God told Eve that a "Seed" (a descendant) of hers would one day crush Satan's head. Eve believed that promise; and so, she had many children. One of those children, named Seth, ended up being in the bloodline of the Messiah. For 4,000 years, many other godly women desired to be the one who would bring the Saviour into the world. (That is why one of Jesus' names is "The Desire of Women.") God gave to *the woman* the privilege of being a vessel to bring the Saviour into our world. However, each woman does have a personal responsibility in order to be saved: she must *believe*. That is why Paul says that women are saved through childbearing *if* they continue in **faith**. Each woman must personally place her trust in Christ alone to save her. When she does so, she then enters into a life of charity, holiness, and sobriety (good works). But it all begins with *faith*. I would ask of you ladies: Have *you* placed your faith in Christ alone to save you? Are you saved?

Christian husband, study God's Word relentlessly, and be in God's House every time the doors are open, so that you may be equipped to lead your wife. Give honour to your wife, as unto the weaker vessel.

III. **Instruction #4: Consider yourself to be an "*heir together*" with your wife.**

With all this in mind, we now come to Peter's last statement in **verse 7**: "**as being heirs together of the grace of life.**" Though this is a statement of fact, it has the effect of a command. The command is: Husbands, you must understand and live by this truth! Should your wife be saved, you should be living in light of the fact that you are an "**heir together with your wife.**"

Now, what does this mean? First of all, of what are you and your wife "heirs"? You are heirs of all the spiritual riches that are in Christ.

Read Ephesians 1:5-7.

Every blessing that comes with salvation is part of the "**riches of His grace.**" The "**riches of His grace**" is far more than "missing hell." In this life, God has given Christians wisdom and prudence, so that we may be able to know His will. He has given us power to overcome sin. He has given us the promise of reigning with Him in His future kingdom. He has given us the "fruit of the Spirit." There are many things that are included in the "riches of His grace." The "riches of His grace" is *every blessing* that comes with salvation—both now, and in the future.

Now, let's take a look at another thing that is part of the "riches of His grace"; and as we do so, there is an important word that I wish to show you.

Read Romans 8:15-17.

Just as he did in **Ephesians 1**, Paul here reminds the Christians in the Roman churches that they had been "adopted" by the Father. This means that they were God's children, and His heirs. However, not only were they heirs: Paul says that they were "**joint heirs**" with Christ.

Now, isn't it interesting that Christians are called "joint heirs" with *Christ Himself*? The Greek word for "joint heirs" is *sunkleronomos*. It literally means "with heirs," or "together heirs." This means that all who are saved are heirs with Christ *in the promise of the resurrection*. Christ was resurrected from the dead; and because of our union with Him, we who know Him will one day receive the resurrection, too. We are a "unit" with Christ in this promise. Likewise, this word "together-heirs" in here **1 Peter 3:7** means that the Christian husband and wife are a *unit* as they are receiving the "**grace of life.**"

This has *huge* implications! Husband, in God's sight, you and your wife are not individuals; you are a *unit*. You are *one in purpose*: and that purpose is to worship Jesus Christ in every aspect of your lives. Should you and your wife both be saved, you are receiving the grace that you need in your daily Christian life *together*, as a *unit*. This means that if you are not working *together* in the proper roles that God has given you, and for the purpose of glorifying God, the "riches of his grace" will be hindered. If the Christian wife is not in sweet submission to her husband; and if the Christian husband is not doing his best to meet his wife's physical and emotional needs, and to protect her from spiritual deception, then God's grace will be greatly withheld in that couple's lives. You can't lose your *salvation*; but your life will be spiritually unfruitful, and very frustrated. God will reward *your* individual faith, when you exercise it, husband; but if you are not endeavouring to help your wife to increase *her* faith in the Lord, so that you can follow Him *together*, then you are not fulfilling your duty; and progress in your spiritual life will be stunted.

Think of it this way. In this age, God has ordained His assembly, the church. A church is made up of many members; yet, it is “one body.” Does God answer prayers of individual church members? Yes. However, He wants us to work together *corporately* in order to carry out His commission. That is the whole reason He established the church! Let’s look at an example.

Read Acts 12:1-5.

Why did God allow James to be executed, and Peter to be imprisoned? Because God wanted the Jerusalem church to *rely upon Him*. He wanted them to *pray together*. This is why we take a good block of time every Sunday and Wednesday to pray *collectively*, as a church body. God wants us to *pray* for the needs of ourselves, other churches, the lost, and the missionaries we support. What we do (or *don’t* do) as a body will have eternal consequences.

This brings me to an important point about being “heirs together.” Since Christian husbands and wives are “heirs together,” receiving the grace for their Christian life *as a unit*, **they will also be judged together as a unit at the Judgment Seat of Christ!** We know, from **1 Corinthians 3**, that every *church* will be judged together at the judgment seat of Christ; and Christian husbands and wives will be judged together, as well. Just as the church will be judged as “one body,” so *you*, husband, will be judged as “one flesh” with your wife. Your *physical* union with your wife will not exist in heaven; but you will still be judged together.

This “heirs together” teaching puts your responsibility in a whole new light, doesn’t it? This is sobering stuff! Should something not be functioning right in your marriage, you *must* get on your face and pray, and seek God’s Word for the answer! Should there be areas in which you, your wife, or both of you, are not surrendering to God fully, you *must* have the courage to lead your wife in making that change—even if it should change your way of life substantially.

Before we close, let’s read **1 Peter 3:7** again. (**Read 1 Peter 3:7.**) Did you notice that Peter gave a *warning* at the end of this verse? He instructs husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, as being heirs together of the grace of life, **“that your prayers be not hindered.”** That word **“hindered”** is the same Greek word that is translated in **Matthew 3:10** as **“hewn down.”** In that verse, Jesus said that **“every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”** The word **“hindered”** literally means “cut down.” This is serious, men! God is not obliged to answer your prayers, or to bring blessing in your life, if you are not doing your best to fulfil your responsibility as the spiritual leader of your wife. Communication with God will be “cut down” if you are not dwelling with your wife according to knowledge, and not seeking God’s leading for you and your wife.

Before you ask God for anything else, husband, ask Him for wisdom to carry out these commands, so that God can answer your prayers.

Conclusion: God has given us husbands the responsibility to “give honour” unto our wives, and to protect them physically, emotionally, and spiritually, since they are the “weaker vessel.” Some of you may not have been aware of these responsibilities when you were married, because you didn’t know the Lord then. If so, you now have the responsibility to learn this teaching, and practice it. Those of us who *were* saved when we were married should understand these responsibilities far *more* now than we did on our wedding day (and keep practicing them)! Are you doing what God has commanded you to do, men?

As we close this morning, I would also ask this: Do you know for sure that you are saved? Perhaps you are trusting in some kind of spiritual “experience” that you once had; but you don’t know for certain that you are truly reconciled with God. If so, I am here to tell you that you *must* repent of your sin and trust in Christ alone to save you. **(See Mark 1:15.)** Won’t you trust Christ to save you today?