

MARRIAGE THROUGH THE AGES

Working At It

1 Peter 3:7 “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

Several places in the New Testament, Ephesians, Colossians, and here in Peter, God gives specific instructions to husbands and wives. Marriage isn't easy. Two becoming one can be hard, especially when each in the marriage thinks the other ought to think and do what they want. In our passage today, Peter addresses husbands. He says, “You husbands in the same way...” The same way was used in verse 1 toward the wives. It carries us back to the end of chapter two and how Christ behaved when mistreated during His trials. In the same way, do what is right. In the same way, you act, don't react.

Husbands are told three things.

First, Peter reminds men that they are not God's sole gift to the world. Wives are “fellow heirs.” Men are not the sole heir. Fellow or joint, means sharing. They share God's grace, blessings and promises. Women can feel like second rate citizens in the church, but that's not how God views them. Peter is reminding husbands about this.

Second, Wives are to be treated as weaker vessels. This does not mean that she is literally weaker. I know some wives that could probably beat their husbands up. This statement deals with how husbands are to treat their wives. She not a cheap piece of plastic that you toss in the back of your pickup that rolls around for a month or so. Instead, she's fragile. She's expensive. When moving, we take the breakable things and wrap them up with bubble wrap. We gently sit it in a box and fill the box with those shipping peanuts. Then we tape it up carefully and write “Fragile” on the top of the box. Then when moving boxes, we sit it on the top so nothing else will sit on it. We take care of those fragile things. This is how the husband is to treat his wife. She's not one of the guys. She's not to be teased and punched in the arm as you might do one of the guys. Treat her special. Treat her as something breakable, expensive and fragile. “Handle with care” ought to be stamped on her forehead so we guys would get the message.

Third, and most difficult, live with her in an understanding way. Understand your wife. One guy complained, “The only thing I understand about my wife is that I don't understand her.” The feminist movement has tried and failed to show that men and women are the same. We are not. In some areas, they may do the same work. They may receive the same pay. But men and women are different. We look different. We act different. We are different. Consider a few ways:

- Like most guys I have one wallet. Mine is black. I wear it with my suit. I wear it with jeans. I take it to the ball game and I take it to the symphony. One wallet, all seasons. Women have purses, lots of purses. They have casual, jean wearing

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purses. They have fancy purses. They have some that are so large that a small child could fit in it. Black, brown, fancy, plain, big, little, shiny, stripped, poka-dot, shoulder bags, hand held ones—different purses for the occasion and for the season.

- Guys don't go to the bathroom together. We wait until one comes back to the table and then we go. Women all go together, like a little party. I'm not sure why, but they do.
- When traveling, I can carry all the things I need to get ready in a zip lock bag. Razor, brush, toothbrush, paste, cologne, little tube of shampoo, deodorant—that's pretty much it. One zip lock bag and I'm ready to go. It's different with wives. They have a truck load of shampoos, conditioners, brushes, creams and things that I'm not sure what they do. They have those things so they look good. None of these things are right or wrong. It illustrates that men and women are different.

Peter is telling husbands to understand your wives. Live with them in an understanding way. They are not you, guys. They are not going to think like a man thinks. They are not going to respond like a man responds. The other night I was watching a movie. It was great. It was a war movie. Lots of shooting and planes dropping bombs. The enemy was getting destroyed by the American troops. My wife happened to walk through the room. She paused and asked, "what are you watching?" I said, "A war movie." She said, "Oh." It was, Oh and then she left the room. I understand "Oh." Oh means she don't like watching people get shot and dying. She's not into zombies either. There's too much chomping, chewing and blood by the zombies. Oh means this is a show that she won't sit and watch with me. Oh means I have better things to do than watch bombs blow people up. Now in my book, watching bombs blowing up bad guys is pretty important. Understand her. That's what Peter is saying.

It is interesting that Peter doesn't tell wives to understand their husbands. I suppose that would help relationships, but most guys are not that complicated. We are pretty easy to figure out. It's the other way around that Peter is after. Husbands are to understand their wives. This means that we must learn to speak "womaneze". We must learn what they need and what they like. We must learn how to comfort them when they've had a bad day. War movies work for me, it doesn't for my wife. My wife is more complicated than I am when it comes to food. I'll eat about anything, especially if you sprinkle chips on the top. Add some chocolate and I'll just about lick the sidewalk. We were at the store the other day. She was looking at breakfast bars. She was reading the box. I only read the box if there is a game on it. She is interested in calories, carbs, fat, salt and those things. I'm interested in what it tastes like. We shop differently. She looks, thinks and looks some more. I'm more the Biblical type of shopper, "seek and ye shall find." I go in looking for something specific, find it and leave.

So all of this leads to two conclusions:

We are different and for that I am glad. I wouldn't want her to be just like me. It would be bad news if there were two of us that were just the same. She compliments me, brings the best

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out of me and helps me in so many wonderful ways. When the kids call, I get to the point and am finished within five minutes. She'll talk and talk. They like that. This tells me that God designed the home with a man and a woman. A dad and a mom are not the same. The kids will run to mom when they want tenderness, kisses and comfort. They'll go to dad when something is broken or they want answers. The homosexual community can't deal with this. Two moms, or two dads, don't work. Even when one is acting like the opposite sex, they are not. God knew what He was doing. The home at its best, has a mom and a dad. That's the way God wants it to be.

Second, for men to understand their wives, they must work at it. They must quit being so stubborn, selfish and pigheaded and give it a try. Peter tells us that we are to, which means that we can. Conversations, situations, and time together helps us to understand. Many wives are crushed by insensitive husbands who have not tried to know and understand them. This is wrong. Much of this falls into the category of wanting to. If a man wants to know his wife he can. If he doesn't, then he won't. The relationship will suffer when he doesn't try. It will suffer if he treats her like one of the guys. We've got to be better at this men.

Marriage, when it's working, nothing beats it. When it's not working, fewer things are more miserable. The joy of marriage comes from a couple that works at it. - Roger Shouse