

Thriving In Marriage

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[0:00] 1 Peter chapter 3, not a passage that is universally loved, and yet this is the word of the Lord, isn't it?

And we want to be attentive to it. 1 Peter 3 verse 1, Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of a word.

1 Peter 3 verse 1, 1 Peter 3 verse 1,
Amen. Definitely not universally loved, right?

1 Peter 3 verse 1,

[3:38] He basically said this section is a bit like a house. Each room of the house is dealing with kind of a different category of suffering, a different category of person.

But the gateway, the doorway into this house is back in chapter 2 verses 11 and 12. Will you just set your eyes on that again? Peter says, It says, So remember, the doorway into this is to say there is a way that God intends for his people to live in the world, and the world is not going to like that. The world will naturally look at that faith. The world will naturally look at that faith and look at that way of life and actually call it evil. And certainly we see that happening all the time in our culture. That was certainly true in Peter's culture as well. But then Peter says that as we do that and as we represent God in the world, faithfulness to him despite the suffering that may come as a result of us, that God will use the testimony of our faith and of our good works in order to draw some of those unbelievers to Christ so that they might then be saved.

Now we see that being repeated here in this passage in chapter 3. We see Peter's presenting a practical outworking of that in the home. So what does Peter mean when he says we're exiles?

[5:36] Well, one, he means that we don't belong to this world. We belong to God, and our responsibility is to glorify him in the world, to be his light shining in the darkness of sin here.

But he also means that those who live as faithful Christians will inevitably suffer in a world that views them and their faith as suspicious, at least, and dangerous at worst.

And again, back in chapter 2 and verse 12, unbelievers will generally view Christians as evildoers on account of their faith, at least their philosophies as evil and wrong, immoral.

And here, Peter is demonstrating what that often looks like. While Christians are to honor earthly authorities, they are to fear God above all.

And that inevitably will lead to conflict and suffering when those who have some authoritative role in our lives instruct us to do something that we know God is not pleased with, and we decide to obey God instead of that earthly authority.

[6:51] That earthly authority isn't going to look at our lives and say, well, I'm just very grateful that you love your God. No, that's not how they respond, typically, is it? It's the opposite of that.

So in this section of the letter, Peter is instructing us how to rightly submit to authority, even unbelieving authority and wicked authority, but to do so in the fear of God primarily, always acknowledging God above human authorities.

And then, of course, he's teaching us how to endure the suffering that will come, not by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, right, but by actually looking to Jesus and seeing the suffering of Christ.

That gives us hope on one hand, as we reflect on the atonement, but it also gives us an example, doesn't it, and how to faithfully follow him in suffering. And when we get to this text, Peter is

focusing on the third category of people who are especially vulnerable to abuse on account of their faith.

After addressing Christian citizens in chapter 2 and then Christian slaves in chapter 2, he now addresses Christian wives, Christian wives.

[8:06] All three of these addresses, they're meant to work together here, all three of them command submission in some regard, the honoring of an authoritative role in your life, even when that person, and maybe especially when that person, is unbelieving and even wicked.

But we need to remember submission itself is not the goal of this text. It's not that Peter is writing this because he really just wants us all to be good, submissive people generally in our lives. Submission is not the goal. Being like Jesus is the goal. The gravitational pull of this whole section is right in the heart of it. At the end of chapter 2, where our attention is drawn to the suffering of Christ and the atonement of Christ and his example.

His atonement then anchors our hope in a future salvation so that when we're the ones who are suffering at the hands of evildoers on account of our faith, we won't have a way to look at our circumstance and have hope in that circumstance.

But we can look to Jesus and say, my hope is anchored there. That my inheritance is not ultimately in this life. My inheritance comes beyond this life.

[9:23] And it is being kept in heaven for me. Imperishable and undefiled and unfading. And I am being kept for it by faith or by God through faith.

That's everything Peter's covered in the first chapter, right? And now he says, he turns our attention to Jesus again and he says, if you are the one who is in the position of suffering on account of your faith, we look to Christ because that anchors our hope.

That it does get better. Maybe not now, but it will. And he will make all things right because he made all things right on the cross when he provided salvation for us.

But it's not just our hope that it gives us. It's an example. He guides us on how to suffer well for his sake. So that if you're a Christian citizen who is suffering under an oppressive government, Peter says, this is how you faithfully follow in the footsteps of Jesus by rightly submitting to earthly authorities in the fear of God.

And in his culture, at least, there was this dynamic of Christian slaves. We might apply that in something of a parallel to what he was meaning there to just our employment maybe. Perhaps you're one who is suffering under an oppressive employer or some type of relationship that fits that realm.

[10:42] He says, here's how you suffer well and you follow in the steps of Jesus as you submit insofar as you remain faithful to God in that submission. And then he does it again here in chapter 3 as he looks to Christian wives.

We have an example in Christ here. Certainly we have a hope in Christ here. Now Peter does do something different at this point than he does in the previous two addresses.

He doesn't only address Christian wives who were vulnerable to abuse and suffering at the hands of their husbands, particularly their unbelieving husbands. He also addresses Christian husbands who were the ones who were in the position to abuse their authority in the home.

And he confronts that here in this text. And we need to keep both of those things in mind. So in this text, it isn't just about wives or husbands. It's about Christian marriage.

How do we thrive in Christian marriage in a world like ours and in the darkness of this world? How can Christians represent God's kingdom and faithfully follow Jesus in their marriage?

[12:01] And we understand as we read our Bibles, we understand that marriage, the home, is the foundation of human flourishing. God designed it that way, created it that way.

We also recognize that it's constantly under attack. God's idea for the home, because it is the foundation for human flourishing, is constantly being attacked.

Culture attempts to constantly redefine what it always is, what it is. And of course, culture's definition of marriage is always absent of God.

It doesn't take God into account at all, does it? Therefore, anything that God gives us in his word is immediately dismissed. And what happens downstream from that is careless Christians and careless churches who begin to be more influenced by their cultural ideas than they are by the word of God.

And we begin to see worldly philosophies of marriage begin to deteriorate in the church. And we want to confront that, because God has called us to confront that. What the Bible gives us in God's design for the home is not a theory.

[13:12] It's not a theory anthropologically to figure out how to best get along together. No, it's the difference between right and wrong, of righteousness and sinfulness, of being faithful to the Lord or being unfaithful to the Lord.

So the stakes are high in a passage like this. It's not just that it's controversial. It's not just that it's sociological and that we can just kind of dismiss it. No, this is actually quite important.

And if it wasn't, Peter wouldn't be addressing it here. And so we need to give it the attention that it deserves. I just want to break it up into the two sections, right? There's an address to wives.

We're going to pull out three things from that address. And then we're going to look at the address to husbands. We're going to pull out three things from that address as well. Here's the address to wives. Most of the attention is given to that here in verses 1 to 6.

And it's this, Christian wives should submit to their husbands in the fear of God. Christian wives, or we could say wives in general, but particularly he's addressing Christians here.

[14:16] Christian wives should submit to their husbands in the fear of God. Now, no one in our culture likes the idea of submitting to authority at all.

But the notion that wives should submit to their husband's authority or that the husband has a unique authority in the home at all, it's not just disagreed with. This is a principle that is loathed in our culture.

And it's not just by unbelievers. This is a controversial idea even among Christians. And I really do think that's in large part due to the fact that there have been so many abuses of this doctrine through the years in Christian circles.

But that God-designed male headship in marriage is not at all obscure in the Bible. It's actually quite clear. It's very plain. But we do need to understand exactly what that means and what it doesn't mean.

And Peter really helps us do that well here. So the first thing we want to draw out from this is just the principle of submission. Just the principle of submission. We see this in the first two verses.

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

[15:40] Now, Peter forces us here to link this text with the previous text. He does that with that very simple word at the beginning, likewise. In other words, he's saying we're going to move on to marriage here, but don't forget about everything that I just said about Christian slaves and about Christian citizens.

He's building on what he's just said there. The principles that he established in those places of authority and submission, they still apply in this case. And the big one is this, that the husband's authority in the home is not absolute.

It is not an absolute authority any more than an employer's authority over his employees is an absolute authority or that the government's authority over its citizens is an absolute authority.

No human has absolute authority. And that's being built upon here. Christian wives are to submit to their husbands in the fear of God so that just as citizens and slaves in the previous text are supposed to honor their earthly authorities or the authoritative roles that God has designed for their lives, they are not to honor that above their fear of God.

And Peter actually says it explicitly, though in the ESV it doesn't become quite as plain, but let me just explain it to you. The end of verse 2, he says that Christian husbands may, or unbelieving husbands may be won by the conduct of their Christian wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

[17:14] And we've already seen this word in this section. If you look back to chapter 2, verse 18, Servants, be subject to your masters with all what? Respect.

Same word. We addressed this there and we need to address it again here. The word here is fear. Tom Schreiner, he says a literal translation of this phrase is that they will observe your pure conduct, righteous conduct, in fear.

The question is, to whom is this fear being directed? To whom is this reverence and honor being directed in this verse? Is it to the husbands that they will see your reverence for them?

Or is it to God that they will see your reverence to God? Now this is why it's so important to keep context when you study your Bible. Because we could take this one verse out, and I could really do a number on wives today, about how your responsibility is to, above all things, give your husband unreserved reverence and fear.

That is not what Peter means to say here. This respect and pure conduct has everything to do with fearing God. It has everything to do with being faithful to the Lord.

[18:38] Indeed, that's the thing that may win an unbelieving husband. Not reverence for him. What would your reverence for him do to point him toward Jesus?

No. It's your reverence for God above him, which results in a life that is pure and righteous and faithful.

And it is faithfulness and faith in our conduct that God uses to bring unbelievers to himself. So the submission that Peter instructs here is a matter of function in the home, not veneration of husbands as men.

Wives are to honor their husband's role, but they are to fear the Lord above their husbands. And that should show in their conduct. And that's how their husbands may be one to Christ.

So what does it mean and what does it not mean? Ladies, this text does not mean that you are a slave to your husband. It does not mean that if he instructs you to do something sinful or to abandon faithful Christianity or the faith in some way, that you must comply just to keep the peace of your home.

[19:59] It's not what this means. It does not mean that you must always agree with him and that you can never have a differing view from him.

I mean, we understand the reality of that, right? I would be an absolute mess without Julie. And you know that.

It doesn't mean that if he abuses you or is unfaithful to you, that you must preserve that relationship at all costs.

It does not mean that you have no biblical recourse for a hateful and abusive husband who has abandoned the covenant that you've made with him. That's not what this submission means.

We need to get that right. Here's what it means. It means that in the ordinary function of the home, you are to recognize that God has given your husband a responsibility to lead.

[21:00] It's God given, whether he's a believer or not. He will answer to God based on his leadership because that responsibility has been given directly to him.

This submission really is about functioning in such a way that you just recognize that. You recognize that responsibility that he has and you support and help him do that well insofar as you are yourself living in the fear of God.

That's what it means. Now, a couple other things are worth pointing out here before we move on. I want you to see that a wife's submission to her husband is voluntary in this passage.

He addresses the wives. Wives, you be subject to your husbands. You choose to submit to the leadership of your husband in your home.

It's voluntary. It doesn't mean it's optional. It just means that the responsibility to do it falls squarely and wholly on the shoulders of you as a wife. It also means this.

[22:17] For you husbands, you are not authorized by God to coerce your wife's submission. You are not authorized by God to punish its absence in your marriage.

There's no place in the scripture where you have been given the authority by God to do that. Yes, you must lead. Yes, you must teach. But a wife's submission to her husband is a matter of personal

obedience to God.

Just as the responsibility to lead the home rests solely on the shoulders of that husband, the responsibility to submit to the leadership of the husband falls squarely on the shoulders of you as a wife.

That's what the scripture teaches us. We understand this, and Jonathan Lehman does a great job of pointing this out in his book on authority. God has given different kinds of authority instruments of correction.

But not all authorities that are designed by God have an instrument of correction. The government does. It's the sword. They punish evildoers. The church, the congregation, has an instrument of correction.

[23:22] It's the keys of the kingdom, right? That's why we talk about church discipline. Parents have the rod of correction that's given to them by God for the correction of their children.

Guess who does not have an instrument of correction anywhere in the scriptures? Husbands. It's not your place to force your wife into submission or to subject her.

No, it's her place to obey the Lord. That falls on her shoulders. Second thing I think is helpful to point out here is the power of faithful Christianity in a rightly ordered marriage.

Just look again at what Peter says. He's presenting the context here which would have been very true for many of the wives to whom he wrote. Even if some do not obey the word, they're unbelieving, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives.

This is really interesting, isn't it? That a faithful wife who lives in her home first as a faithful disciple of Christ which shows itself in proper and right submission to her husband's leadership will be able to win an unbeliever, an unbelieving husband to Christ in the grace of God.

[24:46] We might understand it this way. What is the evangelistic role of a Christian wife in the home of an unbelieving husband? We might understand what Peter's saying like this.

The most effective way to win your husband to Christ is not through evangelistic nagging. He says if they don't obey the word of the gospel, they may be won even without a word, meaning that he's not telling wives that their number one goal in the home is to be an evangelist, but that their number one goal in the home is to be a faithful wife and that it is in being faithful to God as a faithful wife that God will use perhaps to bring their unbelieving husband to faith.

Of course, we understand salvation can't come apart from the word of God. We know that, but I think he's emphasizing here that your conduct in the home, just faithfulness as a wife matters. It matters a great deal not to the Lord but also to the power of the gospel at work in your husband's life.

So that's the principle of submission. Secondly, we see the beauty of holiness. The beauty of holiness. Look at verses three and four. Peter continues and it's connected.

He says, Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear. Let your adorning, your adornment, be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God's sight is very precious.

[26:21] Peter's moving now from the basic principle of submission to the beauty of holiness that produces it. This is about character and pursuing character that gives way eventually to biblical submission and the home.

And he makes the point really in an interesting way. He contrasts here what the world values with what God values. Notice the language. We've seen it a number of times now in the letter, haven't we?

Notice he talks about perishable and imperishable. This is clearly on Peter's mind as he sits down to write this letter. He's used it over and over and over to create these distinctions between the world and between the sacred and of God's people in the letter.

And here he says there is something that the world values and it's perishable but there's something that God values about you and it's imperishable and it's unfading. And what is it?

It's the beauty of holiness. True beauty isn't in external adornment but it's in the hidden person of the heart, he says. Therefore the Christian woman's pursuit is not the external trappings of physical beauty but the character of the heart that is precious in the sight of God.

[27:43] And Peter's point is this that holy character is the place from which a wife's godly submission to her husband springs forth. Submission

isn't a social construct meant to oppress women and treat them as inferior to men.

That's not what the biblical idea is. That's been abused in many places but that's not actually what the Bible teaches. It's actually the fruit of godliness that flows from a woman's desire to know and please God.

Now some people have looked at this and they've taken it too far and you can see this in some Christian circles where they've said well it's actually sinful for a woman to fix her hair or to wear jewelry or to wear makeup or to care about the way she looks.

That's not what Peter means. He's not saying that external adornment is sinful. He's saying that it's not the priority. That's not where your value is. Now I want you to think about this for just a second. I want you to consider Peter's exalted view of women here. It's counter-cultural. Certainly it was counter-cultural to his day. It's counter-cultural to our day.

[28:53] And it's really simply this. Ladies, you are more than how you look. You're more than how you look. I want to suggest that it's actually the cultural view of women that's actually so oppressive.

There's an enormous amount of pressure on women to conform to a particular idea of physical beauty. And the culture machine has worked hard to flip the truth on its head.

It markets vanity as virtue. So that body modification and obsessive dieting and age prevention procedures and materialism, they're all built as self-care.

So then the world puts this idea of beauty, an unrealistic and fabricated idea that isn't real. It's even less than human. They say, this is the idea of beauty and you can't live up to that unless you do all of these things and then you do all of those things and guess what?

Our bodies still fade, don't they? We still age. then it tells you that in order to gain the self-esteem which is supposed to be your priority that you have to trace after youth.

[30:14] Do you see the oppression in that? It's a vicious cycle. It says that a woman's value ultimately is in how she looks. The Bible teaches the opposite of that.

Peter says it clearly. You are more than how you look. Your value is not in your youthfulness. Your value is not in what you have.

Your value is not in your style or whatever. He isn't saying that adornment itself is sinful. He's saying that external beauty isn't the measure of a woman's value.

So it shouldn't be the main focus of your life. Because beauty is perishable, isn't it? And it will always be perishable. And you know what? That's okay.

It's okay because your value isn't in your youth anyways. It's in who you are as an image bearer of God. And it's demonstrated primarily in the cross of Christ.

[31:15] That he did not die for your beauty. He died out of love for your soul. And I think Peter is helping us to remember this here.

In contrast to the perishability of external adornment, he speaks of the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God's sight is very precious.

What does that mean? What does it mean to be gentle and quiet? That in itself feels offensive, doesn't it? Do you recognize that this is exactly how Jesus described himself?

Matthew 11, 28 He says, come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. And how is it that he's capable of giving us rest?

Because he immediately goes back and he says, because I am gentle and lowly in heart. my yoke is easy and my burden is light and if you come to me you will find rest for your soul.

[32:20] You know what Peter is saying that a godly woman looks like? She looks like Jesus. She looks like Jesus. This doesn't mean that you must be silent. That's not what this is.

It doesn't mean that you can't have vigor in personality or in your home. It certainly doesn't mean that. I know your husband's well enough to know that you need to be vigorous in the home.

It means that the beauty of a godly wife is when her spirit is a place of rest and refuge rather than war. I know your husband's well enough to know that they know that you are women of rest.

That they don't have to come home to war. And coming on to you is like coming home to Jesus over and over and over again. Because you're modeling how he is in your home.

That's the beauty of holiness. Isn't it? It's another way of describing meekness. Meekness isn't weakness.

[33:31] Meekness is actually power and capability that's controlled and channeled for righteousness. Meekness often looks like submission in lots of different relationships.

But especially in marriage. And God says that's a precious thing in his sight. External beauty will always fade. Godliness is imperishable. And if you take nothing else from this ladies take this that your value is not in how you look.

It is in the value that God has placed on you as his creature. And that he has demonstrated his love for on the cross. There's a third thing here.

I don't mean to just dwell on this forever but there's a third thing here that I think is helpful for us and it's the faith of submission. The faith of submission. We see this in verses 5 and 6.

Peter grounds this discussion. He says this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands.

[34:40] And he illustrates it as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord. And you are her children. That's interesting isn't it? Who is typically referred to in the Bible when we're thinking of spiritual things?

We are the children of who? Of Abraham. And here Peter doesn't say that we're the children of Abraham does he look at these wives and says the no you're the children of Sarah. I think that's significant actually.

You are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Now he's merging here the principle of submission with the idea of adornment and he insists that the holy women of old live this way not because of their culture or a cultural idea but because they quote hoped in God.

do you see what's at the heart of this life of submission or this way of life in the home? It's faith. It's hope. It's trust in the Lord.

They didn't adorn themselves in submission out of a blind reverence for men but a full trust in God's promises and provision. In other words it takes tremendous faith in God not in men for a wife to submit to her husband's leadership.

[35:56] Sarah is the one that Peter points to to illustrate his point and I want you to think about that. You know her life. You know her story. God's call of Abraham was also a call to Sarah as his wife and it took amazing faith for her to follow Abraham as they left their home and what they knew in Ur of the Chaldees to go and wander in the wilderness of a foreign country.

She spent her life wondering. Not because she just really loved Abraham though I think she did but because she trusted God. It took just as much faith for her as it did from Abraham to believe that God would give them a son well after childbearing years.

It took tremendous faith for her to trust in God's promises and in God's protection when her husband Abraham repeatedly put her in vulnerable positions.

Do you remember what he did? He forced her on multiple occasions to lie about who she was. And you know what she did? She loved her husband well but she trusted that God would protect her even if Abraham had failed to.

That's amazing faith. We can look at Sarah's worst moment in Genesis and what is it basically traced back to? That in that moment she wasn't trusting God to fulfill a promise.

[37:26] She decided to take matters into her own hands and force Abraham to have sex with her slave. But through it all she adorned herself in submission not because of Abraham but because she believed God.

Her submission to Abraham was the sign of her submission to God and the result of that is amazing. It's the blessing of God's promises which eventually lead to the coming of Christ so that we might be saved.

And Peter says ladies you will be the children of Sarah the matriarch of God's people when you trust God like she trusted God.

And that trust will force you in some way to follow the leadership of a man who you can't trust like you can God.

You're the children of Sarah when you live in faith of submission even when it's a fearful thing to do. And for some of you and for some of your friends that you may would have these conversations with what's frightening could just be the unknowns of where your husband may lead you.

[38:42] Maybe you're a planner and you like to have things in order and maybe he likes to fly by the seat of his pants a little bit and just says we'll just we'll figure it out as we go and you have to say that's a scary thing for me.

But I gotta follow my husband I'm gonna help him in any way that I can. Right? That's a fearful thing to do isn't it? Of course it gets worse than that doesn't it? Sometimes Christian women are just married to morons right?

It's a fearful thing to have to continually follow him poor decision after poor decision after poor decision. It's a fearful thing to do. For some it's even worse than that.

What's frightening is an unbelieving husband who does not love you or lead you the way that the Bible demands for him to do. Maybe it's an abusive husband. It's frightening things isn't it? And you need to remember that even in the most fearful moments God is faithful even when your husband is not.

And his grace is sufficient for you even when your husband's leadership is not. So keep hoping in him and trusting that he is working for your good and pursue the beauty of holiness and just watch the way that he works in your life and in the life of your husband.

[40:03] All right. Well that's a lot for the women. Peter doesn't just talk to the wives does he? We move on to the men now. Here's the second big section. Christian husbands should lead their homes in the fear of God.

Christian husbands should lead their homes in the fear of God. The first one Christian wives should submit to their husbands in the fear of God. Now husbands are to rightly lead their homes in the fear of God.

Look at verse seven. 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.

Now remember the focus of this part of the letter is on how to faithfully live as God's people when under authority especially the authority of unbelievers. So Peter's primary subjects here if we can just look at the bigger picture for again for just a second I don't mean to just beat a dead horse here but if we just look at the big picture again he's dealing with citizens who live under the authoritative role of unbelievers.

He's looking at slaves Christian slaves who live under the authoritative role of unbelieving masters and then he's looking at Christian wives who live under the authoritative role of an unbelieving husband.

[41:22] This sticks out because it's the first time in all of those situations that Peter addresses the other role. The role that's not so much in a position of vulnerability in the relationship.

But the reason that he doesn't spend so much time here is because the focus is on the one who suffers. The one who's vulnerable in the section. But it is helpful that he moves on to this isn't it? When Peter does something here in these two sections he takes this moment to address them. Christian wives will thrive in exile as they submit in the fear of the Lord.

Christian men will do so when they lovingly lead their homes in the fear of the Lord. And when the home functions according to God's will everybody wins.

And that's what we learn from this. Likewise again ties this all together doesn't it? He says it again at the beginning of verse 7. He doesn't mean it exactly in the same way as before. The context is changing now.

[42:21] He doesn't mean that husbands are now to submit to their wives. That would be counterintuitive to the discussion. The likewise here relates to living in the fear of God. So they are not the vulnerable in the relationship now.

They're the authoritative one in the relationship and they are to exercise that authority in the fear of God as one who is under the authority of God. In the case of Christian husbands living in the fear of

God means lovingly leading your wife as an equal in Christ Jesus.

Not as an inferior but as an equal. And there's three things we can just maybe quickly note here. Number one men live with your wife in intimate care.

Live with your wife in intimate care. Look at the beginning of the verse. Likewise husbands live with your wives in an understanding way. In an understanding way. What does that mean?

Well it's clear isn't it? You need to know her. And you need to pursue knowing her. But it's not just intellectual knowledge that Peter has in mind here men.

[43:34] The understanding that Peter refers to is the same word to know that's routinely used in the Bible as relational intimacy.

Which may be a scary phrase for you but don't let that scare you away. That's a godly thing.

Typically in the Bible when the Bible says that a man knows his wife or knew his wife it's referring to sexual intercourse.

Peter is not referring to sex here. Don't misunderstand me. But he is talking about the intimacy of relationship that leads to a healthy marriage. This is a man who lives to know his wife well.

He adores her. He pursues her. He wants to know her intimately as a person so that he might best care for her.

That's the end goal isn't it? I want to know her so that I might rightly under the authority of God love her and care for her as an individual.

[44:39] Which may look different than how he would care or love an individual who is not his wife. It's a man who doesn't view his role as one to be served.

Rather he understands his authority to be given to him so that he might serve her. And in order to serve her and to faithfully lead her you must know her intimately, lovingly, caringly.

And to do that well men we must learn to pursue relational intimacy with our wives so that we might use our authority to care well for them.

Maybe that's men just as simple as regular date nights where you can just learn a little bit better what makes her tick.

And all of you men have been married a long time. Those of you and you young people back there at the back table you can just listen and learn for your future, right? You've been married long enough to know that in those early days you think you know your wife.

[45:46] And then you realize I don't know this person at all. And if that's scary for you imagine what she was thinking. You've been married 15, 20, 30, 40, 50 years.

I know Marty and Fay are getting close to that now. And you don't really know your wife. What have you been doing? How can you lovingly lead somebody that you don't really know well?

You know what this is a picture of? Pursuit. Not the pursuit of physical intimacy. The pursuit of her as a person so that you might use your authority rightly in the fear of God.

Live with her with intimate care. Second, love your wife like a treasured possession. Love her like a treasured possession.

I don't mean to insinuate that your wife is your possession. That's not what I mean by that. But I want you to see what Peter says. Second part of the verse. Live with your wives in an understanding way showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel.

[46:59] Ladies, don't get upset at that. What does he mean when he says weaker vessel? He's not speaking about emotional weakness there because we know that women are not emotionally weaker than men.

He's not talking about spiritual weakness because we know that sometimes the mainstay of spiritual life in a home is the wife, not the husband. He's just speaking of generally physical weakness.

You are just not quite as strong as your husband is for the most part. There may be some exceptions, but generally it's not true. But why does he say that?

Because the temptation for the strong one will always be to abuse the weaker one. To treat the weaker one as if they exist to serve him.

And when that service doesn't happen the way that he means for it to happen, he responds with intimidation and domination. Peter's confronting that here.

[47:57] That's the idea. That's not a godly thing. In fact, it's wicked. And it's worthy of God's judgment. And it will receive God's judgment.

No, you are to view your wife like the most treasured thing in your life. Like a precious thing that you don't want broken, that you don't want stolen, that you don't want hindered in any way. And you're going to use your authority to honor the preciousness of your wife so that you might protect her, love her, and lead her well.

So in Peter's words, you will honor her for her preciousness. Men, your role is to love and cherish and protect her as a precious and treasured vessel.

Third thing, lead your wife, not as an inferior because that's not what she is. Lead your wife as an equal heir of the grace of God.

Lead your wife as an equal heir of the grace of God. This is why the earlier discussion at the beginning, we're just trying to parse through some of the misunderstandings about this conversation.

[49:09] That's why this is so important. The wrong idea is to say, well, I must lead my wife because she is less than me as a woman.

That's just not true. The Bible never says that in any way. This is a matter of function. In the home, as in many other places, there must be a relationship of authority and submission for the home to function well.

God has designed it to function with a husband leading his home faithfully. Not leading his wife as an inferior but as an equal. And yet they have differing responsibilities.

That's why we call ourselves complementarians. We have complementary roles in the home for human flourishing. So that authority and submission in the home, they're not matters of superiority. They're matters of function. Men and women are equal in their dignity. They're equal in their worth as people made in the image of God. And even more, Christian men and women are equal heirs of God's salvation.

[50:14] Your inheritance, ladies, is exactly the same as your husband's inheritance in heaven. It's the same. Why? Because in Christ, there is no male and female.

That's what Paul says in Galatians 3. There's neither Jew or Greek. There's neither slave or free. There's neither male or female. You are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are in Christ Jesus, then you are Abraham's offspring.

Heirs according to the promise. Joint heirs with Jesus is who we are as believers. And the essential equality does not deny male headship.

It clarifies it. It clarifies it lest we misunderstand God's design as dominance or superiority. No, it's actually sacrificial service.

Men are to lead their wives in light of the gospel of Jesus. Husbands, you are to recognize your wife as an equal heir of grace. And your leadership is to be modeled after him who loved the church and gave himself for her, Paul said in Ephesians 5.

[51:24] You're to lead your wife as an equal means of loving her as your own body. For he who loves his wife loves himself, Paul says in Ephesians 5.

So there's this warning that Peter then brings to the surface after all of that. He says, men, if you fail in leading your wives in the fear of God, you should have no expectation that God will just be at your beckoning call to meet your needs.

That's a strong warning, isn't it? Isn't that what he says? Since there are heirs with you of the grace of life, do this so that your prayers won't be hindered.

What does he mean by the prayers there? It doesn't mean that God is deaf to us. He means that why would we have any expectation of God meeting our needs when we're unwilling to meet the needs of our wives?

Christian men, they need to model this kind of intimate care and love to the rest of the world.

[52:31] Why? Because it displays the gospel. Displays Jesus' love for his people. His sacrificial love. Women are to model this kind of godly submission to the world.

Why? Because it displays the gospel. The gospel of faith and trust in the Lord. God, again, created marriage as the foundational institution of society.

And that's why Christians are always so eager to defend and confirm it, right? That's why we care about that. We need to care about it. But then, of course, few things are more loathed than this idea

in our culture, too.

And that means that to live faithfully as God's people, Christians will inevitably be working against the grain of our culture. And the adversary knows how important biblical marriage is.

He attacks it both on the left, who seeks to redefine marriage, and he attacks it on the right, by those who would take what God has said and twist it for their own sake.

[53:43] As God's people, we must remain faithful to God's design, even when it's costly. And that's why it's so important to see how faith is at the heart of Peter's addresses here.

Men and women must simply trust God to live this way. We must view our marriages through the lens of the gospel. We must determine to display God's glory and biblical authority and submission to the world.

And as we've seen, this is how God will draw men and women to himself. Keeping our eyes on Jesus, we will persevere in hope, even when in a broken relationship, if that's your experience. Or perhaps maybe you know someone you could counsel who's had that experience. And in the end, this is how Christians thrive in exile. This is how Christian marriage thrives in exile.