

**Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, August 5, 2020**  
**Devotional on 1Peter 3:7**

*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

What a great thing marriage is—the picture of Christ and the church. And what a great duty it is to be a husband, to love one's wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

In Ephesians 5:26–27, one main part of husbands' imitating Christ is to lead their wives in the means of grace. To bathe their wives with water. To aim in all things at their sanctification. And, since it is the Lord Who must effect the change, to pray with and for their wives.

Here, in 1Peter 3:7, there is a profoundly important, but often-overlooked way that husbands are to imitate Christ: by listening to them in order to bring all that they know to bear for doing every possible good to their wives.

Some translations read “husbands, likewise, live with them in an understanding way.” And this surely is a part of what this verse means. Christ, the quintessential Groom, listens to His bride. She always has His ear. She always has His sympathy. He is glad for her to pour herself out to Him. So, let husbands imitate Christ in this. Let your wife always have your ear and your sympathy. Make your manner with her one that communicates this to her. If she is halting or reticent, do as Christ does, and urge her to divulge her heart and mind to you.

But being understanding of her thoughts, opinions, and feelings is not all that this means. Quite literally, the text says to “dwell with them according to knowledge.” And surely it is one of our joys that Christ dwells with us according to the unlimited knowledge that He has with respect to His divine nature. Earthly husbands do not have such an advantage. They must learn. And they must be devoted to learning.

Most of all, a husband must be devoted to learning Scripture and good theology (as good theology is nothing more or less than understanding Scripture in the context of the rest of Scripture). How will he bathe her with the Word, if he does not know the Word? How will he know whether her desires are wise to fulfill, if he is not wise from Scripture? But this also means that he must make sound study of all that touches her wellbeing. Economics, good health, whatever property or industry they happen to be invested in as a household, etc.

You are her husband! Gather whatever information you can that might improve her life as your wife. And apply it judiciously.

As our Scripture proceeds to say, this especially means giving her a special honor. Some vessels are made for honor and others for dishonor. Peter may well be thinking of what Paul wrote in Romans 9:21, where that apostle used the same words for ‘vessel’ and ‘honor’, because Peter immediately goes on to say, “as being heirs together of the grace of life.”

Yes, in God's creation order, the wife is generally expected to be more fragile. Certainly, the man must aim at being strong in order to be able to handle her with care. The “weaker vessel” in this case could be paraphrased as a “fragile vase.”

Is this not how Christ is with us? We are weak, but He is strong. And He deals with us gently, employing His strength to protect us, dealing with us in perfect gentleness.

The conclusion of the verse is a little jarring. If a husband does not listen to his wife, the Lord will not listen to him!

This may happen, providentially, by his being unable to pray well. Certainly, if his heart is not inclined properly toward his wife, then even if he multiplies words, his prayers will not be ordered rightly before God.

But these hindered prayers may also be a function of failing to be joined together with her as an heir of grace. Everything for which we look to Christ comes by His grace. But God has appointed a husband and wife to inherit together. If he is hindering her from receiving grace, he is hindering himself, who was to receive it jointly with her.

Finally, these hindered prayers may simply be the direct judgment of God. Just as He places other conditions such as, “if you do not forgive others, the Lord will not forgive you;” so also He may simply say that if your ear is closed to your wife, then the ear of heaven will be closed to you.

How glorious that Christ is our perfect, heavenly Husband! And as His bride is not so much an individual, who is just one member of the body, but more so the corporate church, so it is the gathered church's great privilege as the bride of Christ to have the ear of Christ. Praise the Lord!