

As you know, we live in a time when the definition of marriage as a union b/w a man/woman is under assault. And while I don't want to minimize this concern, the truth is **it's easier to DEFINE marriage than it is to BE married!**

In fact, there are some people who say you have to be crazy to be married. I'm reminded of a Kansas courthouse where they have (2) directional signs stacked. The 1st sign points to the *Marriage License Bureau*. The 2nd sign points to the *Mental Health Dept*. The problem is the two arrows point in the same direction. Sounds about right!

While it isn't crazy to be married, it is crazy to think b/c you are you'll automatically have a fairytale life. It doesn't work that way. Why? *Marriage a high maintenance relationship.*

Have you heard the phrase – *a marriage made in heaven?* The Bible teaches all marriages are made in heaven even if selected on earth – b/c God has joined it together. Here's the **catch** – it still has to be **maintained** on earth.

In 30 yrs of performing weddings, I've not forgotten who really joins these lives together – God! Sadly though, b/c too many couple haven't maintained their vows by following God; it looks like their marriages originated in hell.

So even while marriages are made in heaven, these high maintenance relationships have to be maintained on earth.

In 1st Peter 3:1-7, Peter speaks about having a marriage that **GLOWS** for the glory of God and for the good of a family.

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over w/out words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live w/ your wives, and treat them w/ respect as the weaker partner and as heirs w/ you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1 Pt. 3:1-7

Ladies, you may be asking why Peter gives (6) verses to the wives and only (1) verse to husbands. The simple answer is we don't know – what's important isn't the **amount** of verses but the **content** w/in them.

I God's Instruction for WIVES

Peter is going to offer (2) priority principles for the ladies.

A SUPPORT Your Husband w/ Submission

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands.

Now ladies, I get the word submit might give you great consternation; yet the idea is more positive than you think.

submit (*hupotasso*) combo word. *hupo* means *under/beside* – it carries more meaning than just of location. It involves the purpose of improving something and supporting. *tasso* refers to arranging something in a proper manner or to get in alignment. So *submit* means to come under or beside in alignment w/ someone to lift them up.

Wives, when you submit to your husbands, it means you're coming under/beside him to give him support and strength.

It doesn't mean to you see yourself as inferior but in partnership. Ladies, God has called you to gently come alongside of your husband to encourage/challenge him so that he might fulfill God's calling on his life.

This is what submission means, now let me show you how it works.

When Meg and I are facing a decision, we always pray about it and discuss it. If we don't agree, we'll pray and discuss it some more. 95% of the time, we agree on the decision we make. In our discussions, sometimes my ideas are more helpful and at other times hers are more helpful – in either case, the goal is to make an agreed upon mutual decision. In those instances where we didn't agree and a decision had to be made – she has aligned under me to lift up my idea. And to her credit, if I was wrong, she has resisted the temptation of saying – *I told you so*.

This means submission isn't so much a *position* we take as it is a *disposition* we assume. Ladies, it's thru this one action you most effectively influence your husband in the faith.

B Dazzle Your Husband w/ INNER Beauty

Your beauty shouldn't come from outward adornment...it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

In our world we have **outward**, physical beauty and true **inner** beauty. And while our world is filled w/ women who are attractive on the outside, there's little more unsightful than a woman whose ugliness seeps from her soul.

Solomon nailed it – *Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.* Proverbs 11:22

Peter says **INNER** beauty doesn't come from make-up, hairstyles, or jewelry/clothing; it comes from a heart given to God. *This doesn't mean the Bible forbids caring for one's self; it just says inner beauty isn't dependent on them.* Peter offers (3) qualities for true inner beauty.

unfading – it doesn't go away w/ age. It has longevity and is refined over time becoming more attractive.

Someone once said – *Time is a great healer, but a lousy beautician.* Women who only focus on outer beauty despair as the years roll on. While a woman who focuses on her intimacy w/ God will become more beautiful w/ time.

gentle – *meek*. In Scripture, meekness is a cherished quality referring not to weakness but strength under control. The picture is of a horse whose mighty spirit has been harnessed for good. A meek woman has a graceful control of herself.

quiet. This word has nothing to do w/ how many words you say or how loudly you say them. It means – *tranquility arising from w/in*. It speaks to a calming presence and refers to being calm under fire.

Ladies – this is the call of God on your life – to pursue and experience intimacy w/ God so that your life works in this world and has wonderful influence and staying power throughout your life.

II God's Instruction for HUSBANDS

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live w/ your wives, and treat them w/ respect as the weaker partner and as heirs w/ you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers

A Seek MUTUAL Submission

Note **vs. 7**. It begins w/ *in the same way*. The same phrase given to wives in vs. 1. **What way?** Remember, the context is speaking about submission. Meaning the men are to grasp *mutual submission* before demanding it from their wives.

mutual submission is the idea is *shared* yielding

Several yrs ago Meg and I were at the Sandestin Resort where I saw something interesting. At the resort, like here in PTC, the golf cart paths are shared w/ walkers/bikers. At a particular point where the path runs underneath Hwy 98 – there's a very helpful sign. On one end of the tunnel there's a sign reading – **Yield to On-coming Traffic**. Guess what the sign on the other end reads – **Yield to On-coming Traffic**. This means neither direction has the right of way. So if someone is already in the tunnel, you should yield to them. This is the idea of mutual submission and **if we'd practice such submission in our marriages, we'd likely have less head-on collisions!**

B Consider Her NEEDS Over Your Wants

Be considerate as you live w/ your wives and treat them w/ respect as the weaker partner.

considerate – to think more about her than about yourself

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church. Ephesians 5:28

Where Peter uses the word *considerate*, Paul uses *love* – the essence of this idea is **unselfishness**. Both Peter and Paul tell us that the man is to take the lead by laying down his life for his wife just as Jesus laid his life down for us.

Meaning – the men are to meet our wives at the point of their need to minister to them. To do this we need to know what these needs are if we're meet them. **Let me give you (4):**

1 Every Wife Needs to be **CHERISHED**

To **cherish is to give it proper value**. To cherish our wives means we show them how valuable they are to us. We do this by showing them that they're always on our minds. This means dropping notes, sending texts, giving flowers, etc. The point is – **we show our wives she matters to us.**

BTW – you don't get credit anniversaries, birthdays, , and Valentine's Day – but you can *lose* points if you miss them. But in those moments where you genuinely are thinking of her and act on it – SCORE!

2 Every Wife Needs to be UNDERSTOOD

You may be wondering why I didn't tell the wives what your needs are – they know. Men need sex, food, and to hold the remote control. But woman are more complicated than us.

Men, we'll never totally understand our wives, but they need to know we're trying to understand her. The best way to do this is by trying to listen to her when she's talking. Most of the time she doesn't want a solution; she just wants to know you're trying to understand how she feels.

Show – it's not about the nail.

Guys, I have (3) words that'll improve your marriage. When your wife is talking to you about a problem, look her deep into her eyes and say, **“TELL ME MORE.”** Score!

3 Every Wife Needs to be RESPECTED

We show our wives respect when they get our attention, **but also when we honor them by making their lives easier.**

Honor is more than opening the car door – it's taking out the trash, picking up our socks and underwear, and cleaning the dishes. To honor you wife means to step up and take things off her plate to make her life less burdensome.

4 Every Wife Needs to be **EMBRACED**

Men – our wives want to know that we physically care about them w/out it always having to lead to something more. They want us to show them affection w/ no ulterior motives. **Touch for the sake of touch is important.**

And Men – you should never lay a hand on your wife except to show her affection.

A husband/wife who had been married 40 yrs were talking to marriage counselor b/c they always fussed/fought. For 20 min., the counselor didn't say a word as they argued back and forth. Finally the counselor stood up and walked around his desk. He pulled the wife up off the couch and took her in his arms. He planted a real Hollywood kiss on her lips. When he finished he said to the husband, "Pops, that's what she needs three times a week." The old man said, "Fine, I'll bring her in on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays!"

Guys, look at these (4) needs: Cherish, Understand, Respect and Embrace. Together, they spell **CURE**. If your marriage is sick, this is how you can work on a cure!

B Be Her SPIRITUAL Hero – and not a Zero

...so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

hindered (*ekkopto*) military term – refers to an army digging a trench in a road to stop the enemy's advance. It describes what Satan will do in your spiritual life if as a husband you do not take seriously your responsibility to be the spiritual leader in your home. Satan will dig a trench in your spiritual life to sabotaged intimacy w/ God and others.

This doesn't mean you have to be more spiritual than your wives. It means you will be ***spiritually responsible*** for your family not shirking your duty to lead, not compromising truth, and protecting the family's spiritual well-being.

Here's a few question for you to answer to see if you're the being the spiritual leader of your home:

- Do they see me as one who seeks after God?
- Am I influencing my wife/kids to be like Jesus?
- Am I leading them to engagement w/ God/church?
- Is our home a spiritual safe haven?

Husbands/wives – this is where we begin. If we want marriages that GLOW for God's glory and bring joy to our lives, then we have to pursue a marriage in alignment w/ God's Word/will. Such a marriage will have an impact not just on your family, but on the families of those around you.

In her book *Love is So Much More, Lord*, Ruth Harms Calkin wrote a poem entitled “Marriage.”

Marriage! It’s rough! It’s tough! It’s work. Anybody who says it isn’t has never been married. Marriage has far bigger problems than toothpaste squeezed from the middle of the tube. Marriage means putting up w/ personality weaknesses; and giving each other the freedom to fail. It means turning self-pity into laughter; and taking a walk to gain control.

Marriage means...Learning when to say nothing; when to keep talking; when to push a little When to back off. It means acknowledging, “I can’t be God to you – I need Him, too.” Marriage means...You’re the other part of me; I am the other part of you. We’ll work through w/ never a thought of walking out. Marriage means...two imperfect mates building permanently giving totally in partnership w/ a perfect God. Marriage, my love, means us!”